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THESIS

**RUSSIAN STANCE IN THE CAUCASUS AND THE
NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY OF GEORGIA**

by

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**RUSSIAN STANCE IN THE CAUCASUS AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY
STRATEGY OF GEORGIA**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT

After the independence of Georgia, declared in 1991, Moscow's strategic stance in the Caucasus has been heavily influencing the formation of the Georgian State, and has created many problems to its security. Three separatist regimes supported by Moscow, Russian bases in Georgia, and a significant economic dependence of Georgia on Russian energy markets were the most visible components of this influence. Russian negative influence on Georgia's security, in combination with many apparent internal problems, determined that during 14 years of independence Georgia became to exist as a failed state.

After the "Rose Revolution" of 2003 this situation has changed and Georgia started to develop policies relatively independent from Moscow's strategic preferences.

This thesis tries to define the possible objectives, strategies and means of the Georgian State to achieve its final independence from Russia, exercise its sovereignty on its entire territory, and provide conditions for the prosperous development of the country and its population. The thesis examines global trends and local developments that influence Georgia's security, and suggests recommendations for the Georgian government.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Georgian State emerged after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Nonetheless, located in Caucasus, Georgia remained important strategic interest for Russia. As the idea of reacquiring independence was widely supported in Georgia in late 1980s and early 1990s, nationalist feelings were growing among Georgia's ethnic minorities too, and Moscow managed to unitize this situation in its interests. The Kremlin aided separatist movements to form their nationalist agendas, and covertly provided weapons, military instructors and "volunteer" troops in the wars against central Georgian authorities during 1992-1993. Later, Moscow managed to secure the role of mediator between the sides but up till now, instead of facilitating peace building between the conflicting sides, the Kremlin serves as effective separator and tries to exploit the instability to its own ends. Moscow pursues the strategy of "suasion" by maintaining instability in Georgia and threatening further escalation.

By doing so, Russia hopes to exercise political pressure over the Georgian government and influence Tbilisi's decisions regarding the military, economic and political domination of Russia in the Caucasus. Moscow views the Caucasus through the prism of strategic interest and as a security concern as well. On the one hand, the issue is Caspian energy resources which Georgia is an alternative corridor for, and on the other hand, the issue is the security of Russian borders, because Moscow views pro-Western policies of Tbilisi as a potential threat of NATO's proximity to Russian borders.

Russian stance in the Caucasus and ineffective policies of the former administration in Tbilisi determined that during 14 years of its formal independence, Georgia could not control its borders, could not eliminate smuggling, and could not restore the territorial integrity of the country. In effect, Georgia came to exist as a failed State. After the Rose Revolution in 2003, this situation has changed and the new government began wide campaign of novel relations with the international community. This drive intensified tensions between Moscow and Tbilisi but Georgia nevertheless succeeded to resolve some of its problems within the short time period. Serious problems, however, remain. Georgia still has to find solutions to two separatist insurgencies, and has to achieve full real independence from Russia.

Direct conflict with Russia is very dangerous for Georgia. Georgia can never develop aggregate structural power that would be sufficient deterrent against Russia. For this reason, this thesis suggests that Tbilisi must prefer developing of “issue-specific” powers, and in this purpose, build strategic relations and alliances. Among the four main domains of States’ power (that is, military, economic, diplomatic, and informational domains) Tbilisi must pay an exceptional attention to its informational strategies, while trying to develop other domains of power according to strictly calculated requirements. This work suggests that Tbilisi must start bandwagoning the United States as the initial step to its genuine independence, but must prefer developing close regional alliances that would enable Georgia to become relatively independent player over time. True independence of Georgia is viewed by this thesis as an inevitable premise to long-term security of Georgian people and the Georgian State, as well as for the stability of the Caucasus and Black Sea - Caspian region as a whole.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. GENERAL FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM

The Soviet Union of 14 years ago is now 15 independent states. Three of these states have already joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU). The status of the others varies according to their aspirations for westernization or pro-Russian sentiments. However, independent states are not the only product of the Soviet breakup. Weak states with their characteristic instability, ethnic rivalries, new insurgencies, uncontrolled weapons trafficking, and strong criminal elements have also emerged from that chaos. New governments deal with these problems in different ways: some “accommodate” criminals, some fight them, some fail, and some simply wait for a better future.

Different types of conflicts are also a part of this reality. However, the geography of these conflicts makes it apparent that all of these conflicts have emerged along or near the border of the former Soviet Union; Transdniestrian separatism in Moldova, Abkhazian and South Ossetian separatism in Georgia, Chechen separatism in Russia, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in Uzbekistan, and the United Tajik Opposition movement (UTO) in Tajikistan.

From Byelorussia to Tajikistan, the young states along the former Soviet border are all decayed in either civil, ethnic, or religious turmoil, but the most “active” conflicts are now located in the Caucasus. Mapping of Caucasian conflicts suggests a very interesting vision of the possible geopolitical rationale behind these developments. For example, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan has clearly generated a buffer zone for NATO’s direct access to the Caspian Sea. Armenia is such a buffer. Georgia is an alternative route for NATO to the Caspian, but Georgia is also significant for Russia as a link to Iran through Armenia, provided that the Azeri link doesn’t work. Besides, and even more importantly, Russia is annoyed by Georgia’s “negative” role as a transport corridor for Caspian energy resources to Western markets and for this reason Russia may see instability in Georgia as a good “divider” on the West’s link to the Caspian.

Today, Armenia is the single strategic partner for Russia in the Caucasus, and Russia maintains a significant military presence there. Because Russia assisted Armenia during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Azerbaijan is very suspicious of Moscow, as is Georgia, because the Kremlin has been very helpful to Abkhazian and South Ossetian insurgents who desire independence from Tbilisi. Despite Georgia's protests, Russia still maintains "peacekeepers" in these insurgent regions of Georgian territory. NATO has no forces in the Caucasus, but there are U.S. trained Georgian troops, and ongoing new programs of U.S.–Georgian military cooperation. This trend seems very bothersome for Russia.

Figure 1. Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)¹



However, the reasons behind these developments cannot be attributed to a single cause. In reality, the reasons are fairly complex, multi-dimensional, and interdependent. But it is also obvious that Russia, the direct descendent of the Soviet Union, both in legal

¹ ELWiS Mirror, The World Factbook, 1998, Reference Maps. <http://www.wifak.uni-wuerzburg.de/fact98/figures/802592.jpg> (accessed April 2, 2005)

and tangible power terms, maintains a political, economic, and military presence throughout its former inner empire and plays a decisive role in shaping the processes in those territories.

Russian interests can be provisionally subdivided into economic and political spheres, which are often interrelated. Later, this thesis elaborates on these Russian interests in more detail, but it is important to note that there are common features in the strategy that Russia employs to maintain its interests in the region. This thesis will expand upon these features in an effort to understand the Kremlin's general behavior, which would be impossible to understand by narrowly focusing on the Caucasus. In other words, it is a requirement to separate those interests and strategies of Russia that are caused by its more general global concerns from those specific to the Caucasus region.

Generally speaking, Russia takes advantage of the remnants of the legitimacy that it has inherited from the Soviet Union. Consequently, it cooperates with governments if those governments comply with the Kremlin's demands, as in the old Soviet manner. However, where governments distance themselves from Moscow, the Kremlin supports sub-state elements, which also derive their legitimacy from the former Soviet empire. In other words, even without a unifying ideology to sustain its control, the Kremlin tries to exploit the old bureaucratic ties in an effort to maintain its power and influence.

In brief, because of the incompleteness of the collapse of the Kremlin's old authoritarian power-structure, newly emerged governments often starve without a way forward and with no will to go back. Thus, on the one hand, Russia acts as a power without legitimate influence on the territories it claims; while on the other hand, these newly emerged governments exert their independence without sufficient power to defend themselves. These developments directly reflect the situation in Georgia, where two major political problems are associated with the territorial integrity of the country. This thesis tries to find ways for Georgia to achieve security.

B. BACKGROUND CONCERNING THE PROBLEM OF INTEREST

Immediately after the declaration of independence in 1991, Georgia's autonomous Republic of Abkhazia and the autonomous district of South Ossetia declared secession from Georgia, with the undefined goal of either independence or unification with Russia. From 1991 on, separatist aspirations of ethnic leaders and the unbalanced policy of the Georgian government led to ethnic conflicts that resulted in nearly 280,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and more than 10,000 deaths. Additionally, thousands of civilian casualties have been documented in the post-war period.²

Today, the difficulty for Georgian authorities is not just the ethnic character of these conflicts, but it also the fact that Russia supports separatist regimes and takes advantage of these conflicts to impose political pressure on the Georgian government. For Russia, Georgia remains vulnerable, not solely because of its complex ethnic composition, but also due to the huge gap of military capabilities between the two states. Georgia also has heavy economic dependence on Russian markets and interconnected energy-supply lines. There are widespread business and informal ties between Russian and Georgian actors that enable Moscow to shift these links to the realm of political influence.

Besides strategic interests, Russia has very serious security concerns in the Caucasus, and this predicament further complicates its relations with Georgia. Chechen guerrillas, Ingush-Ossetian antagonism, and the occasional rising aspirations of Lezgins of Dagestan to integrate with Azerbaijan directly threaten the territorial integrity and stability of the Russian Federation. With its own insurgency problem, Russia is sensitive to the developments in Georgian policy, which Russia believes grants freedom of movement to various separatists and even provides them a base of operation within Georgia.

Further evidence of Russia's security concerns is that Moscow openly declares its fears that the "westernized" Georgia may accommodate NATO bases in the future – a

² The United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) Statistical Yearbook, 2002, <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/statistics/opendoc.pdf>; (accessed: November 16, 2004) UNHCR Refugees by Numbers, 2003, http://www.irr.org.uk/pdf/unhcr_2003.pdf (accessed November 16, 2004); Minorities at Risk (MAR), 2004, <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/chronology.asp?groupId=37201> (accessed: November 16, 2004) Global IDP database (2004) : <http://www.idpproject.org> (accessed: March 19, 2005)

problem Moscow wishes to encounter least of all³. Thus, here are plenty of unresolved problems in the relations between Russia and Georgia, and as a result of these impediments, Georgia still cannot resolve its territorial problems, cannot strengthen its economy, and is unable to provide peace or guarantee the development of the country. In turn, Russia stays largely vulnerable due to its unresolved ethnic problems and economic threats that come from the Caucasus.

C. FOCUS OF THE STUDY

The goal of this study is not to focus on the problem as a general theoretical issue, nor is it to fully address the wide range of problems between the two states. Rather, the goal is to focus on the Georgian security dilemma and its possible resolution. Generally, the notion of “security dilemma” will be pivotal for this study. As Mearsheimer points it out, “the essence of the dilemma is that the measures a state takes to increase its own security usually decrease the security of other states.”⁴ Consequently, this study will have to look into such strategies of Georgia that wouldn’t cause an overreaction by the Kremlin. In other words, this is the security dilemma for Georgia: to act with Russia’s capabilities in mind; and to create conditions enabling Georgia to increase its own security while avoiding overreaction from Russia. Simple logic dictates that for such a small state as Georgia, in its relations with such a giant neighbor, it would be very dangerous to resort to “hand-to-hand” antagonism. Rather, the strategy must be as indirect as possible, and should be directed to eliminate all formal grounds for Moscow’s aforementioned “overreaction”.

In an effort to formulate specific ways to achieve the accomplishment of Georgia’s security, this thesis will investigate Russia’s objectives, vision of achievement, and capabilities in the region. It will also examine indirect factors that influence both sides’ behavior. Finally, an analysis of Georgia’s objectives, ways for achieving those objectives, and Georgia’s capabilities will be undertaken.

³ Eric Miller, “Georgia Sets its Sights to NATO”, Central Asia – Caucasus Analyst, 2003, http://www.cacianalyst.org/view_article.php?articleid=1346 (accessed: April 2, 2005) Christopher Deliso, “A Quite Battle in the Caucasus: Georgia Between Russia and NATO”, www.ANTIWAR.com, 2001, <http://www.antiwar.com/orig/deliso7.html> (accessed: April 29, 2004)

⁴ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, London: University of Chicago, W.W. Norton, 2001), 36

In the end, the study aims to investigate Georgia's strategic options in achieving security. As reflected in the title and this introduction, the study envisions Russian politics as one of the main obstacles hindering the peaceful and democratic development of Georgia.

D. METHODOLOGY

Dorff⁵ suggests conducting strategic analyses on three major levels: System/international level, nation-state level, and individual level. He describes a system as having two important characteristics: systems are anarchic (that is, there is no one decision-maker or authority in the world); and states (or else structural elements of a system) behave to develop their power relative to other states. The second level of analysis suggests that because states are the primary actors, it is the internal character of these states that determines overall patterns of behavior. The "individual level" of an analysis emphasizes that it is individuals who make decisions that determine the state's behavior.

While individuals play immeasurable roles in the politics of Russia and Georgia, and while it is impossible to completely ignore this dimension of the strategic environment, this analysis will focus on system and nation-state levels more than on the individual level.

As accepted in most academic works on security issues, four key elements of national power will be analyzed. They are diplomatic, informational/psychological, economic, and military domains. In this work, the feasible combination of these elements that would neutralize Russia's ability to interfere in Georgia's development is discussed.

To summarize, Russia's security dilemma and its influence on Georgia's security will be examined in this thesis. For this, a relevant analysis of system and national levels will be conducted, and the same will be done in analyzing Georgia's security dilemma. After developing the nature of international and regional involvements and internal realities of both countries, it will be possible to observe at what points Russian and Georgian interests conflict and what kind of resolutions are realistic.

⁵ Robert H. Dorff, "Some Basic Concepts and Approaches to the Study of International Relations," in: Guide to National Security Policy and Strategy, ed. Bartholomees, 6-8 (U.S. Army War College, 2004).

Accordingly, this thesis first defines Russia's interests in the global environment, determines the implications of these interests in the regional (Caucasian) context, discerns Russian strategy for addressing its "Georgian" interests, and assesses the means available to Moscow for dealing with these interests. Secondly, this thesis evaluates Georgia's security needs. To accomplish this it distinguishes Georgia's security threats, elaborates on existing views for their resolution, finds feasible correspondence of these strategies within the constraints of available resources/means, and appraises effectiveness of these strategies.

In the end, this thesis will try to determine strategic opportunities and policy options for Georgia and provide some recommendations for Georgian policy and decision-makers. The body of this study will be constructed by four main "building-block" chapters. The second chapter will expand upon Russian interests and the Russian security dilemma. To accomplish this, the chapter will scrutinize all major strategic documents of the Russian Federation (e.g. the National Security Concept, the Military Doctrine, the Concept of Economic Security, etc.). At the same time, in an effort to conceptualize the underlying interests and behavioral patterns behind the Kremlin's conduct, the chapter will look at some distinguished publications in the field. The means which Russia possesses to accomplish its interests will be one of the main concerns of the study. For this, Russia's capabilities will be assessed in all four strategic dimensions mentioned above: diplomatic, economic, informational and military domains. Accordingly, there will be a need to look at the nature of Russia's involvement in some major international organizations, like the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Russia's place and prospects in global strategic balance will also be a part of this chapter's brief attention. In the end, the significance of the "Georgian question" for Russia will be examined. The chapter concludes with assumptions on how significant Georgia seems for Russia; what particular interests are pushing Russia in the Caucasus; how Russia will likely try to accomplish its interests; and what kind of forces and how much military, diplomatic, economic, and psychological resources it can commit for their purposes.

The third chapter will look at Georgia. The main questions of this section will be: What interests does Georgia pursue? How does the Georgian administration try to pursue

these interests? To answer the question about interests, this chapter will undertake a brief strategic assessment of Georgia's geographic location, and will look at the geo-strategic opportunities and disadvantages of the country. Having framed the interests, the chapter will look at the condition of the Georgian state's power structure and its place in the system of international relations. In other words, the chapter will try to determine the extent of Georgia's "relative power" in comparison with that of Russia. Diplomatic, informational, economic and military dimensions of that "relative power" will be independently examined in this chapter. The section will close with an explicit picture of strategic advantages and disadvantages that Georgia faces in its struggle with Russia.

The fourth chapter will identify the strategic options for achieving Georgia's vital interests. The definition of the Georgian security dilemma and the choice of the strategy for the Georgian side, however, will strongly depend on the available means to the Georgian state. The vision of the strategic theatre, derived from the previous chapters, will be employed to construct strategic scenarios and the ways to their resolution. The chapter will close by stating the feasible strategies that Georgia would have to launch under certain conditions, that is, with clear strategic scenarios where Georgia can reasonably expect to succeed.

The final chapter will examine particular steps that the Georgian administration has to undertake in order to achieve security. This chapter will discuss the current situation and the adjustments Georgia must make to improve its capabilities. This chapter will contain the final recommendations of the study.

II. RUSSIAN OBJECTIVES, CIRCUMSTANCES, OUTLOOK AND MEANS IN THE RELATIONS WITH GEORGIA

A. EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL DIMENSIONS OF THE STRUCTURE OF RUSSIA'S SECURITY

After the first years of independence, Russia began to recover from the ruins of the USSR and Russian political leaders began to seek an ideology that would create a basis for national unity. In this process, several unique elements of the newly emerging Russian nation seem to have important meanings. Russia inherited much of the vast military, diplomatic, technological, and informational, manpower, and other resources from the Soviet Union. Over a fairly short time, this led to the revival of the great power ambitions of Moscow, now based on a nationalist ideology. However, a multiethnic and highly separated composition of the new Russia did not allow officials in Moscow to quickly unite the nation. This internal instability was one of the main reasons why the Kremlin found it difficult to build efficient internal structures that would guarantee the stability of the country and support policies abroad. Consequently, the initial drive for “westernization” that followed after the Soviet breakup began dramatically declining since 1999, and has given way to something that is sometimes referred to as a “new Soviet-Russian” identity⁶. The perception of modern Russian politicians is that fundamental threats, both internally as well as externally, exist. On the one hand, different ethnic groups and subjects of the Federation hold aspirations for independence. On the other hand, externally, Russia faces the expansion of NATO, the expansion of the EU, a rapidly growing China, and the overwhelming power of the United States. Russia, having great power potential, believes that it is perceived as a future threat by other great powers that try their best to “help” Russia fail. Public opinion strongly supports the idea of an old-style world power, and domestic political elites help maintain that “narrative” of great power ambitions.⁷

Officials in Moscow understand that their nuclear weapons guarantee that Russia won't be directly attacked by any other major power. Nevertheless, Russia's non-nuclear

⁶ Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 & 1999*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2002), 39-83

⁷ Ibid, p. 78

deterrent capacity is very weak, and indirect pressures on Moscow may prove to be effective. These external pressures may take different forms and shapes, such as neglecting Moscow's economic interests, supporting insurgents and separatists in Russia, undermining legitimacy of the government by fostering social dissatisfaction among the population. Currently, Russia experiences all of these problems, and Moscow believes most come from the West. Accordingly, the Kremlin sees the solution to most internal and external problems in preventing the West's interference in Russia's affairs.⁸ However, the possible idea that the West's anti-Russian policies could be motivated by the Kremlin's behavior itself is not seriously considered in Moscow. They still see the antagonism between the West and Russia in the purely geopolitical prism.⁹

B. MAIN STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The era of post-Soviet doctrines in Russia started in 1992, when the Kremlin issued the first *National Military Doctrine*. In this Military Doctrine, the National Security Concept (NSC) was described as "the highest security document from which military doctrine is derived."¹⁰ However, it is interesting to note that the NSC did not exist by that time, and the first NSC was issued only by 1997. The period between 1992 and 1997 was a period of Russian policy without defined bearings¹¹.

In 1997, events of Kosovo helped to crystallize the foreign policy direction of the Russian Federation. In 1999, President of the Academy of Sciences of Russia, Army General Gareyev, stated that NATO's strategy, following the security policy of the

⁸ This discourse is particularly visible in ultra radical parts of the Russian political spectrum. E.g. V. Zhirinovskiy, the leader of Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, has stated that the United States of America was responsible for creation of four conflict areas in the world: in the Balkans, Middle East, Caucasus and Central Asia. See: *Vladimir Zhirinovskiy Criticizes Us Foreign Policy*, PRAVDA RU, <http://english.pravda.ru/main/2001/05/12/5080.html> (accessed 04.21.2005), also: *Putin's Fury: They Want to Isolate Us*, Kavkazcenter, (in Russian) <http://www.kavkazcenter.com/russ/content/2005/02/22/30655.shtml>, (accessed: February 22, 2005)

⁹ For example, the most prominent political scientist Alexander Dugin, in his recent essay "Only Continental Alliance will Save Us from USA" argues that the United States must be balanced by "large spaces" of the Eurasian continent. See also: *Russia Security Chief: Western Spies Plot New Velvet Revolutions in CIS*: Civil Georgia Online Magazine, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=9867> (accessed: May 12, 2005)

¹⁰ Marcel de Haas, "The Development of Russia's Security Policy, 1992-2002," in: *Russian Military Reform 1992-2002*, ed. Anne C. Aldis, Roger N. McDermott, 3-21 (London, Portland, OR. Frank Cass, 2003)

¹¹ Ibid, p. 6

U.S.A., was no longer directed at defense but at preemptive use of force instead. This included the possibility of using force outside the “area of responsibility” of the alliance, and that the United States was pursuing policies to establish a unilateral world order. Gareyev declared that statements of the 1997 Concept, that direct threats against RF no longer existed, were outdated. NATO’s new strategic concept and Moscow’s view of its internal threats, (such as conflict in Chechnya), were declared by him as reasons of adjustment of security concepts of the Russian Federation.¹²

By 2000, Russia developed new underlying principles of national security. The National Security Concept of the Russian Federation¹³ describes the modern world as a dynamically transforming system of international relations. It reveals two alternative trends prevailing in the post-Cold War world. One is the process of economic and political integration of a considerable number of states and alliances, leading to the formation of a multi-polar world order. Russia favors this order. The alternative to this is the system of international relations structured to favor the developed countries of the West, led by the United States. This alternative system, the Concept suggests, will favor predominantly violent solutions to international disputes and will tend to violate the established fundamental norms of international relations. As such, Moscow favors the existing world order where Russia maintains membership in influential international organizations, and the order that guarantees territorial indivisibility of the country.

Due to its size, location, and economic, scientific and military potential, the Concept suggests that Russia will remain an important player in world affairs. The Concept envisions Russia’s increased integration in the world economy, and improved cooperation with different international institutions. At the same time, the Concept warns that attempts to ignore Russia’s interests in key international issues can challenge international stability and weaken positive tendencies in the world.¹⁴

¹²Marcel de Haas, “The Development of Russia’s Security Policy, 1992-2002,” in: *Russian Military Reform 1992-2002*, ed. Anne C. Aldis, Roger N. McDermott, 3-21 (London, Portland, OR. Frank Cass, 2003), p. 7

¹³ The Concept of National Security of the Russian Federation, *Documents*, National Security Council of the Russian Federation, <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/Documents/Decree/2000/24-1.html> (accessed: November 9, 2004)

¹⁴ Ibid

Thus, at least two points clearly underlie Moscow's foreign policy objectives in general: to resist the trends leaning to the unipolar world model; and to ensure that Russia becomes one of the main centers of the multi-polar world. And yet, Moscow sees it problematic to pursue such objectives. The Concept describes this problem mainly as the result of the poor state of the national economy, incomplete organization of the state's power-system, and the social-political polarization of Russia's people. "Complication of international affairs", according to the Concept, also creates a broad spectrum of internal and external threats for the national security of the state"¹⁵

Thus, the Kremlin places the Russian economy at the top of their major internal concerns. In the light of external threats, the Concept puts special emphasis on the policy of maintaining close ties with the CIS member states and its "traditional partners". The most important external problems and actual challenges for Russia, revealed in the Concept, can be briefly summarized as follows:

- A possible drop of importance of international organizations, especially the UN and the OSCE¹⁶;
- Expansion of NATO to the East; possible emergence of foreign military bases and contingents in the immediate neighborhood of Russia; weakening of the integration processes in the CIS;
- Emergence and escalation of conflicts near the borders of Russia and in member states of the CIS;
- Weakening the influence of Russia in Europe, Near East, Transcaucasus, Central Asia and Asia-Pacific (literary, in the whole world); and
- Destabilization caused by an international terrorism.

¹⁵ The Concept of National Security of the Russian Federation, *Documents*, National Security Council of the Russian Federation, <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/Documents/Decree/2000/24-1.html> (accessed: November 9, 2004) , author's translation

¹⁶ Russia's attitude towards the OSCE has been changed dramatically as the Kremlin became convinced that they cannot utilize this organization for their unilateral needs. This trend especially hardened after the OSCE's Border Monitoring Operation (BMO) suspended along Georgian-Chechen border due to Moscow's veto and pressure on budgetary allocations for the organizations missions. According to declarations of Russian Defense Minister Ivanov, the OSCE is a "European tax-payer" and therefore an inefficient as impartial monitor of the Russian-Georgian border. Ivanov blamed organization for turning the blind eye to "convoys of terrorists passing right under its nose" (see, e.g.: Sergey Ivanov, "Speech at the 37th Munich Conference on Security Policy," *Munich Conference on Security* (2001) http://www.securityconference.de/konferenzen/rede.php?menu_2001=&menu_2005=&menu_konferenzen=&sprache=en&id=21& (accessed: April 17, 2005)

A special paragraph is devoted in the Concept to NATO's new Strategic Concept: Russia warns again that taking action without the UN sanction, and outside the "zone of responsibility" of the organization, will tend to destabilize the strategic situation in the world.¹⁷

All in all, it can be said that the Concept reveals the Kremlin's strategic vision, which aims at replacing the old bi-polar confrontation by a new multi-polar "harmony." Russian goals are set on resisting the growing U.S. influence at the expense of other significant Eurasian players. In longer terms, Russia seeks leadership within this alleged "Eurasian club" and admits that addressing economic difficulties would be the first requirement towards achieving this goal. In this light, the National Security Concept of the Russian Federation clearly indicates that economic cooperation with other major powers is a vital ingredient of Russia's policy goals.

Notwithstanding such "integrational" aspirations of Moscow, Dov Lynch¹⁸ describes president Putin's attempt during 1999-2003 to establish closer ties with the EU as the one that didn't yield many significant results. The same could be said about the Kremlin's relations with Asian powers India and China; and the same is true for most of the CIS member states. In reality, Russia has no genuine allies,¹⁹ and none of Russia's international projects can be said to be working. Almost every such project ends on the level of loud declarations. Byelorussia can be seen as an exception and genuine ally of Russia, but it seems more trustworthy that the regime of dictator Lukashenka is definitive for such an alliance.

J.J. Mearsheimer's theory of "offensive realism"²⁰ provides good insight for explaining Russia's strategic environment. Given its size and population, Russia has a huge potential for growth, and combined with its second largest reserves of nuclear

¹⁷ NATO, *Documents*, The Alliance's Strategic Concept, Approved by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington D.C. on 23rd and 24th April 1999, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm> (accessed: April 22, 2005)

¹⁸ Dov Lynch, "Russia's Strategic Partnership with Europe", *The Washington Quarterly*, spring (2004): 99

¹⁹ It cannot be excluded that Russia develops close allies over time, the more so that Moscow's flirting with Iran on the one hand, and France on the other, already shows such elements. It is another question, of course, how viable those alliances will be, and how much beneficial for Russia in the end.

²⁰ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, London: University of Chicago, W.W. Norton:, 2001)

warheads and its illiberal culture, it is perceived by others as a potential danger. For this reason, the European players are cautious towards Russia. They would cooperate with Moscow only if it were clearly in their interests, but they would take advantage of any opportunity to clip Russia's wings. Mearsheimer's theory would suggest that however democratic it is, Russia will still remain dangerous to the West. True or not, what is important is that Mearsheimer's views are exactly what is believed in Russia. Thus, the Concept of the National Security of Russia, the Concept of Foreign Policy of the RF²¹, and theories of many leading Russian political scientists,²² suggest this is how Russia will address its external security challenges.

After 9/11/01, an increased presence of the West in Russia's "backyard" undermined Putin's reputation in the CIS. Having problems with his own insurgents, Putin found it beneficial to comply with the anti-terrorist rhetoric of the West. Subsequently, and for the time being, the United States and Europe recognized the right of Moscow to use force in Chechnya. These changes in international realities made Moscow believe that it too could use preemptive means in its neighborhood. As a consequence, Russian blackmail strategies intensified against Georgia, who Moscow accused of sheltering Chechen terrorists.²³

The first military doctrine²⁴ of RF was issued in 1992. For the first time in Russian history, the doctrine addressed internal threats. The doctrine envisioned the

²¹ The Concept of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, *Documents*, National Security Council of the Russian Federation, <http://www.scrf.gov.ru/Documents/Decree/2000/24-1.html> (accessed: November 9, 2004)

²² E.g. two mostly influential Russian political scientists who maintain especially close ties with the Kremlin, S.A. Karaganov and V.L. Inozemtsev published the article "About the XXI Century World Order" where the authors assure the reader that the United States will shortly fail to maintain their leadership and this failure will pose a threat of global chaos to the world. Instead, authors suggest constructing a model of "collective governance". It is meant that Russia will play important role in this "kolkhoz". See:

Vladimir L. Inozemtsev, Sergey A. Karaganov, "About the XXI Century World Order," (in Russian) *Russia in Global Politics*, No. 1 (2005) <http://www.globalaffairs.ru/region-africa/numbers/12/3632.html> (accessed: February 12, 2005)

²³ Georgia Prime Source of Threat for Russia? In: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, 12.11.2001. <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=854> (accessed: 12.12.2004)

²⁴ Brief description of the Doctrine see at: Marcel de Haas, "The Development of Russia's Security Policy, 1992-2002," in: *Russian Military Reform 1992-2002*, ed. Anne C. Aldis, Roger N. McDermott, 13-18 (London, Portland, OR. Frank Cass, 2003)

stationing of Russian troops throughout the CIS as a means of acquiring a dominant position in the organization.²⁵

In 1996 the Defense Council of RF, referring to new negative challenges, announced the need for a new doctrine.²⁶ These challenges were defined as:

- Attempts to diminish Russian influence in the Caucasus;
- Enlargement of NATO;
- New military threats and regional conflicts; and
- The deteriorated socio-economic circumstances in the RF

The draft of the Doctrine was issued in 1999, and was approved by the President in 2000. Some of its doctrinal innovations included: a raised attention to internal conflicts; a recognition of irregular warfare; the need for joint operations and inter-agency coordination; the increased importance of nuclear weapons to deter aggression and lowering the threshold of their use. The apparent weakness of conventional force capabilities and strong anti-Western views characterized the Doctrine.

Two underlying problems, being surrounded by enemies and the need for protection of Russian citizens abroad, played the “legitimizing role” for these Doctrines. Surprisingly, a weakened Moscow was still emphasizing the crucial role of military means in addressing their foreign policy objectives. Emphasis on “hard power” still dominates Russian strategic thinking.

C. RUSSIA’S SECURITY DILEMMA AND SPECIFIC FOREIGN POLICY QUESTIONS

In his “Russia’s Strategic Partnership with Europe”, Dov Lynch makes one significant statement: “Russia intends to be Europe’s gateway to the former Soviet Union”²⁷. This seems to be the Russian formula for solving their security dilemma. The Kremlin views the economy as the main pathway to political success, and given that Russian economy is heavily dependent on different natural resources, Moscow tries to

²⁵, Brief description of the Doctrine see at: Marcel de Haas, “The Development of Russia’s Security Policy, 1992-2002,” in: *Russian Military Reform 1992-2002*, ed. Anne C. Aldis, Roger N. McDermott, 13-18 (London, Portland, OR. Frank Cass, 2003) p. 13

²⁶ Ibid, p. 14

²⁷ Dov Lynch, “Russia’s Strategic Partnership with Europe”, *The Washington Quarterly*, spring (2004): 104

ensure that it maintains access to the most significant economic resources of the former Soviet space, and quickly redevelops its “latent power”²⁸. Russian Caspian-oil diplomacy and Moscow’s protectionist attitude²⁹ towards Caspian energy resources are good examples of such an approach. Meanwhile, Moscow hopes that its economic expansion would be more tolerable for its strong counterparts in Europe and the United States, than if they’d seek immediate military dominance throughout and beyond the CIS. Briefly, economic expansion is the foremost near-term objective of Russia. But Caspian resources themselves are becoming the issue of a misunderstanding between the West and Moscow knows that local political elites throughout the CIS, and particularly in the South Caucasus, tend to “lean westwards” if they have no incentives for not doing so. Thus, the Kremlin employs economic handles to check west-leaning “voluntarism” of their small neighbors. As said, the Kremlin is particularly worried about the Western ties of their small neighbors.

Here arises another possible discord with the West. Russian policy raises doubts that the administration in Moscow really intends to integrate the Western world, and that its democratic drive is just another strategy of a totalitarian empire to buy time.³⁰ Trying to buy time clearly makes sense for Moscow, and the abovementioned two chief objectives (the imperative of fast economic recovery and the need of regional dominance) generally frame the Russian foreign policy. Moscow seems to believe that for now, such an approach is the best way out of their security dilemma. It is better than military confrontation with the West and better than final “capitulation” in becoming westernized itself.

²⁸ The term is used according to John J. Mearsheimer, *Ibid*, 60-67

²⁹ On March 18, 2004, Russia’s Caspian affairs emissary Kalyuzhny stated that president Putin had directed him to ensure that the greatest volume of Caspian energy flows through Russian pipelines, see: Jim Nichol, “Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: Political Developments and Implication for U.S. Interests,” in: *CRS Issue Brief for Congress*, January 19, 2005, (received through the CRS Web)

³⁰ Western concerns about Russia can be well illustrated by the public statement of President Bush after the two-and-a-half hour private meeting with President Putin in Bratislava, on February 25, 2005,: “I think the most important statement that you heard, and I heard, was the President’s [Putin’s] statement, when he declared his absolute support for democracy in Russia, and they’re not turning back.” See: Igor Torbakov, “Different Understanding of Democracy May Put Bush and Putin on Collision Course,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, issue 39 (2005)
http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?search=1&volume_id=407&issue_id=3243&article_id=2369323 (accessed: 03.01.2005).

To address its interests, Moscow often attempts to play a “fair trader” card and ignores the fact that it is not an equal partner in this game any more. They demand that Brussels and Washington give up ambitions to integrate new regions that Russia counts as its own, but because it is harder to deter the ambitions of the West, Moscow tries to deter the “western” aspirations of its neighbors. With the former it has limited power, with the latter it has greater relative power, with relations with Georgia being a prime example.

To ensure that the United States doesn’t coerce Moscow into giving up ambitions in their neighborhood, Moscow manages to cleverly employ its old influence in the world, and again buy time with the hope for a better future. Russia’s constructive position in Afghanistan, for example, was highly credited by the United States and it really was very significant. During the Iraq campaign Moscow couldn’t accept the growing U.S. influence and therefore strongly opposed U.S. policies while simultaneously trying to maintain friendly relations with Washington.³¹

It should be very interesting to note that in their foreign policy calculations, the Kremlin almost excludes the possibility of normal relations (meaning a relationship of equals) with the states of their “backyard”. Moscow views them primarily as territories of potential, or already realized, influence. By ignoring the issues of their sovereignty and independence, Russia can easily earn new enemies instead of partners. It seems possible, though, that the “belt of security” that dominates Russian geopolitical and realpolitik minds will transform into a “belt of insecurity” in the end, and there are already plenty of examples of this happening.

D. RUSSIAN INTERESTS IN THE CAUCASUS

Dov Lynch writes that Russia sought to establish predominant influence in the region “by an approach that is the least costly economically, politically, and internationally, for Russia itself.”³² “The objective of Russian government,” – he wrote in 2000, “is not to recreate the Soviet Union, but to forge a variegated sphere of influence.”

³¹ Goldman, S. D., “Russia,” in: *CRS Issue Brief for Congress*, January 5, 2005 (received through the CRS Web)

³² Dov Lynch, *Russian Peacekeeping Strategies in the CIS: the cases of Moldova, Georgia and Tajikistan* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), 28

Lynch views the Russian strategic goal as that of deterring extensive intervention in the CIS by outside powers and organizations.

Timothy L. Thomas, in his article about the Kremlin's interests and the Caspian Sea published by the Foreign Military Studies Office of the US Department of Defense³³, makes the argument that can be briefly paraphrased as follows:

In the region, Russian specific interests are:

- To strengthen the security of the southern flank;
- To confront the expansion of separatism throughout the North Caucasian republics that would restrict Russian access to the Caspian Sea; and
- To ensure that cash flows, in the form of Western capital, will continue from Central Asian [and Siberian] oil fields, and that these flows are not redirected out of Russia and into the Caspian region.³⁴

According to Thomas's view, Russia is concerned by: the loose and unofficial alliance of the United States, Turkey, and Azerbaijan (Thomas omits Georgia from this list); Pan-Turkic trends in Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan; the creation of the GUUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova) alliance,³⁵ which Moscow views as the U.S.-backed handle against Russia; Westernization of the region; and expansion of "foreign" alliances like the EU and NATO at the expense of Russia's former "allies."³⁶

Similarly, Dov Lynch speaks about Moscow's "security anxieties in southern Russia, instability in the Northern Caucasus, and the perception of increased foreign influence in the Transcaucasus"³⁷ that has shaped their attitude towards the Caucasus.

³³ Timothy L. Thomas, "Russian National Interests and the Caspian Sea", *PERCEPTIONS*, volume IV, no. 4 (2000): 75-96

³⁴ Importance of Caspian oil resources rises along with Siberian resources' exhaustion

³⁵ Due to reluctant position of Ukraine's former President Kuchma and Moldova's communist President Voronin, the GUUAM alliance experienced a period of decay during last three years. Now this situation has dramatically changed and the GUUAM is acquiring a new status.

³⁶ Thomas especially emphasizes that Moscow only now begins to realize how dangerous become to them new members of the EU. These new members, having been formerly the Russian-occupied territories, help to convert the EU into the organization immanently hostile to Russia.

³⁷ Dov Lynch, *Russian Peacekeeping Strategies in the CIS: the cases of Moldova, Georgia and Tajikistan* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), 13, 27-28

Thomas's article also reveals some possible responses that Russia would wage to resolve the above listed concerns. These include:

- Creating the Russia – Armenia – Iran strategic triangle;
- Treating the region as the zone of Russian influence;
- Securing a friendly buffer zone;
- Securing stability in the North Caucasus and avoiding ethnic tensions;
- Dismantling U.S. power in the region;
- Protecting ethnic Russians and Russian citizens³⁸;
- Retaining military presence in the states of the region
- Controlling economic/trading routes of neighboring countries; and
- Controlling natural resources of neighboring states and imposing Russian-preferable policies of their exploitation.

The fact that Moscow's concerns are really outstandingly acute in the Caucasus, and that the military dimension of these concerns is very significant, one would notice it by locating the concentration of Russia's ground forces throughout its regions. Russia is divided into six military districts (MD) and one special military region of Kaliningrad (FIGURE 2). The allocation of ground forces throughout these regions reveals an interesting picture:³⁹

- Leningrad MD Army HQ (St-Petersburg), total strength: 34,000;
- Moscow MD Army HQ (Moscow), total strength: 82,400;
- Volga-Urals MD Army HQ (Yekaterinburg), total strength 31,700;
- **North Caucasus MD ARMY HQ (Rostov), total strength: 102,800;**
- Siberian MD Army HQ (Novosibirsk) – number unknown⁴⁰;
- Far Eastern MD Army HQ (Khabarovsk) – number unknown;
- Kaliningrad Operational Strategic Group, total strength: 10,500.

³⁸ 400000 Russian citizens live in Turkmenistan; 500000 in Kazakhstan; and Moscow disseminated Russian passports in South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Transdniestria, to artificially create the spheres of legitimate interest of Russia.

³⁹ Armed Forces, Russia, Jane's Online (2005), and "Russia" in: *Military Balance 2003-2004*, IISS: 85-95

⁴⁰ Provided that total number of Russian ground forces equal 321000 (see: Armed Forces, Russia, Jane's Online (2005), and "Russia" in *Military Balance 2003-2004*, IISS: 85-95), the total strength of both, Siberian and Far Eastern MD Army HQs cannot exceed 59600.

The greatest number of troops is located in the Caucasus. In short, Russia's interests in the Caucasus combine Moscow's most crucial security concerns and direct economic interests, and the Kremlin seems ready to do their best to address these interests.

Figure 2. Russian Military Districts⁴¹



E. IMPLICATIONS FOR GEORGIA

Provided that Moscow pursues traditional great-power “behavioral standards,” there are a number of important conclusions that this study must derive. First of all, Russia is anxious about other powers’ proximity to its borders, which means that Russia will always oppose the so called “westernization” of Georgia, and especially Tbilisi’s supposed enrollment in international institutions that are not controlled by Moscow.

Put another way, we can expect that Russia will do its best to halt the Georgian drive for westernization and will hinder Tbilisi’s goals of joining NATO and the EU. Russia would also challenge any attempts by Georgia to become independent from Russia either in political or economic terms. This chapter discusses Russian strategies that foment instability in Georgia for its strategic purposes. It is expected that Russian bases in Georgia, which are already a long-time issue of discord between Moscow and Tbilisi, will remain a problem. Also, Russia will further try to monopolize strategic sectors of the Georgian economy, such as energy distribution and communications systems, and will not retreat from its support to separatism in Georgia.

⁴¹ *Military-Administrative Division of the Territory of the Russian Federation*, Ministry of Defense of Russian Federation, Official Website, <http://www.mil.ru/stc/vo.shtml> (accessed: 02.22.2005)

F. RUSSIAN STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE THEIR OBJECTIVES IN GEORGIA

Provided that Russia tries to maintain the status quo, the way by which Moscow tries to ensure success of its policies much resembles the strategy of coercive diplomacy. Dov Lynch calls it a “coercive strategy of suasion” (in opposition to “supportive strategy of suasion” employed by same Russians in Tajikistan).⁴² Lynch focuses on Russian use of peacekeeping forces and he states that they employ a peacekeeping mandate “in the context of Russian coercive interference in the internal affairs of states”. Following Edward Luttwak’s concept of “armed naval suasion”, Lynch develops the concept of “coercive suasion”. “In this strategy,” writes Lynch, “coercive intervention and “peacekeeping” operations, as well as political/diplomatic pressure, are combined tools used by the Russian government.”⁴³ Lynch distinguishes three levels in the Russian strategy of suasion: (1) forms of behavior, (2) targets of strategy, and (3) objectives⁴⁴.

Forms of behavior include:

- Negative and positive tools of policy:
- Coercive intervention in the conflicts by Russian forces already on ground
- Deployment of ‘peacekeeping’ forces at an appropriate juncture
- Actions of Russian forces to protect the border zone
- Various forms of economic and military assistance (to separatist clients)
- Political pressure to reach conflict resolution on Russian terms.

Targets of Strategy include:

- Central governments
- Separatist or opposition movements
- International organizations and ‘outside’ powers.

Objectives include:

- Exploitation of instability to its own ends.

⁴² Dov Lynch, *Russian Peacekeeping Strategies in the CIS: the cases of Moldova, Georgia and Tajikistan* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), 19-32

⁴³ Ibid, p. 27

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 28

During the last 15 years, Russia has employed different strategies toward Georgia. In 1991, when the Georgian administration decided on secession from the Soviet Union and declared independence, then-Soviet-president Gorbachev directly threatened Georgia's President Gamsakhurdia that Georgia would have problems in the autonomous regions.⁴⁵ Thus, Gorbachev's blackmail failed to alter Tbilisi's decision, and Georgia did encounter problems of separatism in its autonomous regions.

After 1993, the final ceasefire in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Russia employed mixed strategies, with the final goal of increasing Russian influence in the region. As noted by Alexander George⁴⁶, an "optimal strategy of crisis management is extremely context-dependent", and so it is here.

At a minimum, Russia wants to maintain the status quo, which means maintaining its bases in Georgia, maintaining pro-Russian regimes in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and maintaining a weak Georgia, politically and economically dependent on Russia. However, Russia becomes a hostage of its own game. Initially Russia's goal was to make Georgia reintegrate with Russia, that is, join the CIS. For this, in 1992 Russia started to support Abkhaz forces (which were almost finally eliminated by the central government of Georgia by that time). In 1993, Georgia joined the CIS. But, as long as the hostility of "victor" separatists to the center continued, Russia finds itself trapped into the alliance with the separatists. Russia found itself in the situation where they would risk their influence if they now tried to side with Tbilisi. Thus, they had to maintain instability in Georgia, with no options to reverse their policies towards the normalization of the situation in the country.⁴⁷ The only option Russians still had was separation of fighting sides, and they did this successfully. This has been the nature of the Russian-enforced "peace and stability" until today.

⁴⁵ President Gamsakhurdia told the Georgian Supreme Soviet on February 17, 1991 that Gorbachev was planning to detach South Ossetia and Abkhazia from the Republic, and is using such measures as a tool for pressuring Georgia into conforming to the newly proposed Union Treaty. See: Chronology, Abkhazia, in: *Minorities at Risk* (MAR), <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/chronology.asp?groupId=37201> (accessed: November 16, 2004)

⁴⁶ Alexander George, *Avoiding War: Problems of Crisis Management*. (Boulder, CO: West view Press, 1991)

⁴⁷ Detailed description of this process see: Dov Lynch, *Russian Peacekeeping Strategies in the CIS: the cases of Moldova, Georgia and Tajikistan* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), p. 30

On the ground, Russia's policies are complicated by Georgia's decision to promote democratization, the respect for sovereignty, minority rights, strong national institutions, and "opening" to the West. In part, Russia cannot directly challenge the narrative of Tbilisi because it's the narrative of the entire civilized world. Instead, Russia has tried to undermine the credibility of this narrative, and block and restrict Tbilisi's informational "coverage" of what is happening on the ground. Checkpoints controlled by Russian "peacekeepers" and destructive informational campaigns are the means to this end.⁴⁸

Hence, Russian coercive strategy in defense of the current status quo targets four main players: separatists, Georgia's central government, international organizations and "outside powers". Protracted conflicts in Georgia ensure that Russia stays in the region at no cost, while hoping that the future will grant them better opportunities to negotiate with the West. It is obvious that Moscow prefers not to negotiate with Tbilisi, but would rather deal only with the United States and Europe. However, the USA and EU provide the main backing for Tbilisi's "liberal" narrative.

In other words, in the Caucasus, and Georgia in particular, Russia faces a multi-level game where on the one hand, they need to deal with local developments, not allowing the situation to get explosive, and on the other hand, playing an international game with the goal of maintaining political weight and negotiating power sufficient to deal with other great powers. Said another way, failure in the international arena would cause immediate consequences in the Caucasus by challenging Russian influence in the "near abroad", and possibly the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation itself.

⁴⁸ This was best visible during the Presidential elections in Abkhazia in November 2004, when Russia set the blockade of the region to ensure that their protégée R. Khajimba wins the vote. See, e.g. Vladimir Socor, "Russia Blockading Abkhazia to Overturn Presidential Election," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume 1, Issue 138, http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?search=1&volume_id=401&issue_id=3160&article_id=2368943 (accessed: 04.22.2005)

Also, detailed description of how Russian Peacekeepers are operating in the region is given in Eric Baudelaire and Dov Lynch diary during their trip in Abkhazia in July, 2000: Eric Baudelaire, Dov Lynch, "Abkhazia Journal," *Documentaire* (2000), <http://www.documentaire.com/caucasus/Abkhazia.html> (accessed: 01.29.2005)

G. RUSSIA'S MEANS TO ACHIEVE THEIR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES IN GEORGIA

To start with, a discussion of means can be split into four sub-groups: diplomatic, informational, economic, and military domains. It is also necessary that these four domains be separately surveyed on at least three levels of analysis. These are: international, national, and sub-national levels, that is, Russia's power in international relations, in Georgia, and in Georgia's separatist regions.

1. Russian Diplomatic Capabilities

Diplomatic capabilities of Russia can be termed "important": Russia is a member of some of the most influential international organizations; it has long history of mutual relations with virtually all important powers of the world; and it has long-time diplomatic traditions. As Reed Fendrick puts it, "the main instrument of diplomacy is negotiation"⁴⁹. Russians' negotiating power is determined by their position in international organizations, their position vis-à-vis other states, and by motivations of their foreign policy goals. For success in the Caucasus, and Georgia in particular, Russia needs to hold the United States from a decisive involvement in the region where Russia needs freedom of actions to ensure that its diminished capabilities still do some job. Thus, Moscow needs to negotiate such a settlement with the United States that would ensure Russian influence in the Caucasus.

It seems that to achieve these goals, Russia employs the strategy of supporting U.S. campaigns in the world, while drawing a hazy "red line" where the Russian interests would cross those of the U.S. To legitimate its interests, Russia tries to employ informational campaigns and suggest to the world its own version of developments, its own "philosophy" of international relations. In other words, Russia tries to promote its own narrative of international relations and create sympathetic audiences in the world.

By cleverly employing large energy supplies in the EU, Russia hopes that it will win loyalty of the EU members. Additionally, Russia tries to escalate anti-U.S. sentiments domestically and, more importantly, in Central Asia, trying to simultaneously build strategic relations with some states of the EU to balance the U.S. influence along its

⁴⁹ Reed J. Fendrick, "Diplomacy as an Instrument of National Power," in: *Guide to National Security Policy and Strategy*, ed. Bartholomees, 181 (U.S. Army War College, 2004)

borders. However, Moscow is very careful in taking the anti-U.S. actions. They never talk directly against the U.S. but Moscow overtly supports policies that would deter the U.S. from further extending their influence. In some places, like former Soviet republics of central Asia, in Armenia, Ukraine, in Byelorussia, and in separatist regions of the Caucasus and Transdnistria, Moscow does/did so by supporting local authoritarian regimes; with China and India, for example, Moscow exploits informational campaigns and there they speak about god-created multicolored world that doesn't favor U.S. dominated unipolar world.⁵⁰

Russian standing in several international organizations is obvious. Not to mention Moscow's role in the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), one would just recollect the Kremlin's stance in the UN before the second Gulf War. Recently, Russia banned the OSCE Border Monitoring Operation (BMO) in Georgia, threatening to veto the budget of the organization; Moscow tried to "kill" the organization and use it for its own interests.⁵¹ Russia was able to do so several times in the past. For example, the UN and the OSCE presence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia respectively, had an effect to legitimize Russia's parallel structures there during many years.⁵²

Thus, diplomacy remains critical for Russia in its relations with the West, and Moscow tries to increase its political weight by flirting with traditional partners and new friends. Putin's recent visit to India clearly indicate the Kremlin's strategy: Russia

⁵⁰ "It is extremely dangerous to attempt to rebuild modern civilization, which God has created to be diverse and multi-faceted, according to the barracks principles of a unipolar world", stated Putin during his visit in Delhi in December 2004. See: Putin, V. "Speech at a Conference in the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Foundation," *Diplomacy and External Affairs*, President of Russia: Delhi, 12.03.2004. http://president.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2004/12/03/1233_type82914_80622.shtml (accessed: May 1, 2005)

⁵¹ Bruce P. Jackson, "The Future of Democracy in the Black Sea Region," Testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations/Subcommittee on European Affairs, March 8, 2005.

Vladimir Socor, "Advancing Euro-Atlantic Security and Democracy in the Black Sea Region," *Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Subcommittee on European Affairs*, March 8, 2005

⁵² Dov Lynch, *Russian Peacekeeping Strategies in the CIS: the cases of Moldova, Georgia and Tajikistan* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000): 13

normally demands that old partners reiterate their respect toward the Russian Federation and declare that Russia is an important player internationally.⁵³

During recent years, Russian diplomatic capabilities were eroded, not only because Russian economy and military experienced serious problems, but also because Moscow could not explain its actions to the world. On the one hand, Moscow agreed that democratic development is correct, but on the other hand, the Kremlin did its best to confront democratic tendencies in Russia and the “near abroad”⁵⁴. It was obvious that the informational component of Moscow’s actions and the actions themselves contradicted each other. This harmed the Kremlin’s diplomacy ever further.

Thus, it can be said that Moscow, confronted with the “ground rules” established by others, by the West, is highly restricted in its actions domestically and internationally as well. For this reason, Moscow will favor to split Europe and the United States as strategic partners. Undermining effectiveness of democratic institutions such as the EU and complicating of the decision making in NATO would further free Moscow’s hands and allow them to interpret democracy in their own terms.

However, despite Russian annoyance, the growing influence of the United States in the Caucasus is a clear fact. In spite of Moscow’s flirting with some of the EU members, the EU is still a non-unitary organization where new members are acquiring ever increasing vote. These new members are the states that have escaped the Russian control just few years ago and they still remember the painful legacy of a strong Russia. All these factors suggest that the Kremlin will probably fail to deter increasing economic and military assistance of other countries to Georgia. It is likely they will also fail to deter members of “unwanted” international institutions and alliances, like NATO and the EU, to integrate Georgia once the latter meets necessary requirements. In fact, Georgia is

⁵³ E.g. in the conclusive statement of the Indian government we read: “The Indian Side regards Russia as a major and highly active member of the international community, and as a country whose voice commands respect and attention on issues of global concern. In this context, the Indian Side strongly supports the earliest possible accession of Russia to the World Trade Organization. The Sides regard this support as an important demonstration of Russian-Indian relations of strategic partnership, and express their desire to develop, after the accession of Russia to the WTO, cooperation within that Organization, based on the principles of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit”. See: Declaration on Strategic Partnership Between the Russian Federation and the Republic of India, 2000

⁵⁴ Bruce P. Jackson, “On Democracy in Russia,” *Testimony before the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*: February 17, 2005

already a part of the “European Neighborhood Initiative”⁵⁵, and it is already implementing the so-called “IPAP”⁵⁶ (Individual Partnership Action Plan) for NATO. Besides, in the face of the U.S. financed GTEP⁵⁷ (Georgian Train and Equip Program) and now SSOP (Sustainment and Security Operations Program) ,⁵⁸ Georgia receives the largest military assistance in the post-Soviet space, which includes infrastructure development, training, and equipment. Georgia is among 16 “eligible” to receive aid from the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation.⁵⁹

The emergence of GTEP, and later the SSOP, illustrates a relative weakness of Russian diplomacy. In 2001, Russia started blaming Georgia of providing havens to Chechen guerrillas, who would also include persons connected with Al Qaeda. By stating this, Moscow needed to find legitimate grounds to coerce Georgia and conduct preventive strikes against “terrorist bases”. The Georgian administration rejected Moscow’s claims, but in the end they asked the United States to help provide the necessary training to Georgian troops in order to deal with any terrorist problem without Russian “assistance.” As a result, the GTEP was brought to the life in 2002.

There is a different story with the OSCE BMO (Border Monitoring Operation). To ensure that Russia cannot pose unfounded claims against Georgia, the OSCE was asked to provide monitors at the Georgian-Chechen border. As mentioned above, Russia banned the mission in December 2004, and immediately renewed claims that Georgia was sheltering terrorists. Georgian authorities worked to replace the OSCE BMO with the EU emissaries but, at a meeting in Luxembourg on April 15-16, 2005, the ministers of

⁵⁵ Tea Gularidze, “EU Boosts Ties with Georgia,” in: *Civil Georgia Online-Magazine* 06/18/2004, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=7156> (accessed: March 5, 2005)

Alexander Rochowanski, “EU Extends Cooperation with Georgia, but Expresses Caution on Accession,” in: *Eurasia Insight*, Issue: 06/17/04, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav061704.shtml> (accessed: March 10, 2005)

⁵⁶ Salome Zurabishvili, “Statement on the EAPC Meeting of the Foreign Ministers,” 12/09/2004, <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2004/s041209q.htm> (accessed: March 10, 2005)

⁵⁷ United States European Command (USEUCOM), *Georgia Train and Equip Program: Fact Sheet*, http://www.eucom.mil/Directorates/ECPA/index.htm?http://www.eucom.mil/directorates/ecpa/operations/tep/englishproducts/fact_sheet5.htm&2 (accessed: March 10, 2005)

⁵⁸ *General Wald Signs SSOP Agreement*, The US Embassy in Georgia, under “Events”, <http://georgia.usembassy.gov/events/event20050329Wald.html> (accessed: April 4, 2005)

⁵⁹ Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), “Armenia and Georgia: Preparing for the Millennium Challenge,” *Russia and Eurasia Program/Caucasus Initiative*, http://www.csis.org/ruseura/caucasus/040728_mcc.pdf (accessed: April 11, 2005)

foreign affairs of the European Union ruled out the possibility of the new monitoring and stated that Georgia must negotiate with Russia on its own. They even rejected the possibility that some members of the EU, like the Baltic States and Romania, could conduct monitoring on their own, without the EU mandate. According to reports, the U.K. was the only state of Western Europe to push the decision, but with no success.⁶⁰

It gets obvious, thus, that by its “counter-balancing” approach, Russia undermines the attractiveness and effectiveness of such organizations as the UN, the OSCE, and maybe even the EU. More importantly, these organizations become serious tools in Moscow’s hands. By controlling/influencing the decision-making process of these organizations, Moscow holds the steering wheel of the Georgian-Abkhaz and Georgian-South Ossetian negotiation process. Additionally, a Russian representative is a permanent member of the JMC (Joint Monitoring Commission) for South Ossetia, where the other sides are the Ossetian separatist representative, the OSCE representative, and a Georgian one. There is the same situation with the QTMC (Quadrilateral Traditional Meeting of Chuburkhinji) with the Russian, Abkhaz separatist, UN, and Georgian representatives as making the four sides of the “Meeting.” As a result, given that the OSCE and UN representatives are impartial judges in this process, the “force distribution” can be said 2.5:1.5 against Georgia. Russia continues to pressure the OSCE to make this ratio plain 3:1 relation, and does so by supporting separatists’ hands. As an example, the Ossetian side requested resignation of the OSCE mission head, G. Ganchev, blaming his leaning to the Georgian side.⁶¹

As it will be shown in the respective chapter below, Russians have committed large military resources in Georgia, including in Georgia’s separatist regions. Hence, having guaranteed the favorable status quo, Moscow permanently calls for peaceful settlement of conflicts. At the same time, however, to ensure that the peace process never reaches any positive conclusion, Russia halts any attempts by Tbilisi to substitute existing negotiating regimes with more effective ones.

⁶⁰ Vladimir Socor, “France Leads the EU’s Nyet to Georgia Border Monitoring” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume 2, issue 76 (April 19, 2005). http://jamestown.org/edm/article.php?article_id=2369613, (accessed: April 20, 2005)

⁶¹ The OSCE Mission Continues to Work in Tskhinvali (South Ossetia), in: *Rambler Mass Media* (in Russian), <http://www.rambler.ru/db/news/msg.html?mid=5720816&s=260005031> (accessed: March 17, 2005)

In relations with Georgia, Russia tries but fails to utilize the CIS levers. Their proposals to create a “common economic space”, “common air defense space”, “common boarder regime”, etc., have been rejected by the Georgian side without much thought. In a word, Russia still maintains substantial diplomatic standing internationally and regionally. In a very sophisticated way, Moscow employs the lifeless OSCE and the declining UN as a means to legitimize its policies toward Georgia. Relations with some EU-members are also exploited. In addition, Moscow uses separatist regimes as “assistants” on the diplomatic front.

2. Russian Informational Capabilities

Frank L. Jones⁶² distinguishes four main components of the informational element of power. These are: public diplomacy, which includes information activities and cultural adaptation; public affairs; broadcasting; and military information or overt psychological operations.

In its relation with Georgia, Russia needs at least two different approaches. On the one hand, their goal is to challenge the legitimacy of the unfriendly government in Tbilisi; on the other hand, their goal is to maintain military presence in Georgia’s separatist regions where they apply “overt psychological operations”. One important element of Russia’s approach towards Georgia is that formally, the West, Russia, and Georgia share the “ground rules” of crisis management. All three parties recognize democratic values, human rights, minority rights, and the need to combat terrorism. Thus, provided that these principles play the decisive role in the negotiations, a strange informational triangle is created where the West plays the arbiter, and the two sides accuse each other in cheating the arbiter. The West will determine who is right, and the West needs evidence which each side struggles to provide.

In this comical situation, aiming to win favorable arbitration from the West, Russia employs “double edged” public affairs, which include official declarations of Moscow on the one hand, often fully consistent with the democratic discourse, and diametrically different actions on the other. The Kremlin uses its military presence to

⁶² Jones F.L. Information: The Psychological Instrument, in: *Guide to National Security Policy and Strategy*, ed. Bartholomees, 213-215 (U.S. Army War College, 2004)

create “informational enclosures” to not let information out or in these areas, while it conducts the full-blown information campaigns within these regions.⁶³

Public diplomacy is a part of the Russian campaign in the separatist regions. It aims to create public opinion which would see Russians as guarantors of stability and their survival against the Georgian threat. Economic issues become the “cornerstone” of these relations most often. For example, in South Ossetia, there is the problem of so called Roki pass, through which the separatist administration smuggles goods from Russia to Georgia and adversely affects the Georgian economy. The Georgian side demands that the Roki pass, which is the only connection between South Ossetia and Russia, be controlled jointly by Russian, South Ossetian and Georgian forces, so as to not allow smuggling in the region.⁶⁴ However, revenues of smuggling are the only source of income for the separatist administration, and although Georgia has offered to provide a large amount of humanitarian assistance to the region, the local separatists understand that to accept such assistance would mean their dependence on central authorities in Tbilisi. Thus, with Russian support, they try to picture the situation as “Georgian humanitarian offensive” against the local population.

The same problem exists in Abkhazia, where the separatist administration smuggles goods from Russia to Georgia. These untaxed products are relatively cheap and they are easily sold in the nearby regions of Georgia. Besides these problems, Tbilisi has detained several Turkish and Russian vessels that officially violated the territorial waters of Georgia. But in effect, Tbilisi failed to effectively prevent subsequent attempts while giving another reason to Russia for blaming Georgia in aggressive actions against Abkhazian people.⁶⁵

Public affairs, broadcasting and military information are also widely used by Russians in these separatist regions. While public affairs aim at supporting Russia’s

⁶³ The good example of this happened in July 2004, when the South Ossetian militia detained A. Kozaev when he was accompanying 12 children out of the Separatist region, to take them to the summer resorts. The event was organized by Georgian authorities. The young man is still imprisoned by the separatist regime. See, e.g. “Kmara” to Rally for Kozaev’s Freedom in Tskhinvali,” *Rustavi 2 TV*, 07.06.2004, <http://www.rustavi2.com/view.php?id=8133> (accessed: November 3, 2004)

⁶⁴ Strategic Roki Pass to Top Next Rounds of South Ossetia Talks, in: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, 07.18.2004, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=7442> (accessed: December 12, 2004)

⁶⁵ Russia Slams Georgia for Opening Fire on Turkish Vessel, in: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, 08.03.2004 <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=7544> (accessed: December 12, 2004)

international standing, military information components are strongly committed in the Georgia's separatist regions. Almost total information dominance of these regions is in Moscow's hands. As defined in the U.S. Army Field Manual No. 100-6, global information environment includes "all individuals, organizations, or systems ... that collect, process, and disseminate information to national and international audiences."⁶⁶ In this respect, Russia is the informational hegemon in the separatist regions. Apart from total control of local media, Russian TV/Radio companies fully cover separatist regions, and Russian newspapers are sold there. Georgian broadcasting covers some parts of these regions, but given that in these regions Russian language enjoys the status near to "official" (most of the population understands Georgian as well but these numbers decline over time), Russian informational dominance is almost complete.

It is also noteworthy that Russia supplies Russian passports in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia.⁶⁷ In part, this fits in with Russia's public diplomacy goals, but also serves their public affairs as to have legitimate rights to defend its "citizens." However, the ethnic Georgian population, which was 47% of Abkhazia and 35% of South Ossetia, has been completely expelled from these regions; it turns out now the majority of locals are really Russian citizens.

Russians address the "public affairs" campaign of the local separatist administrations, which usually fully coincides with that of the Kremlin. But "recruiting" separatist administrations in the domain of political affairs further affects local public opinion as it creates the visibility of legal and recognized independence. All in all, it can be said that Russia possesses clear advantages in the information domain. They fully shape and control local public opinion and possess greater forum internationally than does Tbilisi.

3. Russia's Economic "Sticks"

For this thesis, Russian economic capabilities are interesting to the extent to which they can support Moscow's policies in the Caucasus, and Georgia in particular. To

⁶⁶Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Information Operations*, Field Manual No. 100-6; Washington, DC, 27 August 1996, <http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm100-6/ch1.htm> (accessed: March 12, 2005)

⁶⁷ MPs Say Russia Annexes Abkhazia, in: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, 01.18.2003, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=3026> (accessed: November 22, 2004)

summarize, in Georgia, Russia pursues the strategy of coercive suasion. Russia needs to employ some economic levers to ensure that it maintains influence in the separatist regions. As an example, one could recall the Russian position when Abkhaz did not elect the presidential candidate favorable to Moscow in late November 2004. Hence, as tangerine plantations are one of the main sources of income for most of the population of Abkhazia, and Russia provides market for these goods, the public opinion was much “softened” when Russia closed the border with Abkhazia and did not allow them to export fruit to Russia. On the one hand, this created frustration among population because it was the first time they experienced real pressure from Moscow; but on the other hand, they allowed new elections.⁶⁸ In South Ossetia, Russia pursues similar policies but the problem is more painful for Georgia because of volume of smuggling and the subsequent economic impact for the country. However, Tbilisi fails to create tangible economic incentives for the local population and thus, fails to overcome the separatist administration of the region.

The problem of energy dependence stems from the Russian near monopoly over the supply of energy to Georgia. It is interesting to note that natural gas comprises 27% of Georgian energy⁶⁹, and almost all of it comes from Russia. Russia is a direct supplier of electricity also, while Georgian “secondary electricity” production (that is, apart from hydro-electricity) totally depends on imported oil. Moscow leverages this situation and threatens energy cut-offs for political pressure on the Georgian government.⁷⁰

By 2002⁷¹, Russia was one of the largest trading partners of Georgia. Georgian exports in Russia comprised 36% of exports in the CIS, and 18% of total Georgian exports; while imports from Russia comprised 40% of overall imports and 42% of those from the CIS. To restrict Georgia’s trade and create dissatisfaction in the Georgian society, Russia unilaterally initiated the visa regime with Georgia in 2000. The reason

⁶⁸ Support of People is not Enough for Abkhaz Presidency, in: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, 12.08.2004, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=8525> (accessed: November 22, 2004)

⁶⁹ “Georgia” in: *International Energy Agency*, <http://www.iea.org/dbtw-wpd/Textbase/stats/noncountryresults.asp?nonoecd=Georgia> (accessed: January 19, 2005)

⁷⁰ Russia has cut natural gas supplies to Georgia several times in the past. See e.g.:

Anatoly Lieven, “Georgia: A Failing State?” in: *Eurasia Insight*, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav013001.shtml> (accessed: April 3, 2005)

⁷¹ State Department of Statistics of Georgia, Official Website, <http://www.statistics.ge>, (accessed: April 3, 2005)

for Moscow's frustration by that time was Georgian demands to remove two of the four Russian bases from Georgia, which Russia finally did in 2001, but the visa regime remains even today.

4. Russia's Military Capabilities in the Region

According to the data presented earlier in this chapter, in its territorially smallest Military District of North Caucasus (NC MD), Russia maintains its largest number Army units. The Joint Group of Forces in North Caucasus was created in late 1999, for the second Chechen campaign. Today, Russian units in the North Caucasus include⁷²:

- Army Units:
 - The NC MD 58th Combined-Arms Army based on the 8th Armored Corps⁷³;
 - The 19th motor rifle division of the 58th Army;
 - The 136th Motor Rifle Brigade;
 - The 205th Motor Rifle Brigade;
 - The 31st Ulyanovsk Airborne Brigade;
 - OMON and SOBR special forces units;
 - The 42nd Motorized Division (permanently stationed in Khankaly, Grozny);
 - Motor-rifle and tank divisions and brigades⁷⁴.
- Interior Troops' units:
 - The 102nd VV⁷⁵ Brigade;
 - Interior Troops special brigade;
 - Detachments of the FSB (counterintelligence) and Interior Ministry's Special Forces.

⁷² Armed Forces, Russian Federation, in: *Jane's Online*: <http://www.janes.com> (accessed: March 29, 2005)

⁷³ This army served in 1999 as a backbone of the Russian task force that, having defeated separatist militants in Dagestan in August, in September crossed the river Terek into the Chechen republic and pushed towards Grozny. Source: *ibid*

⁷⁴ The Naval Infantry Kaliningrad regiment and five Airborne (VDV) battalions have been pulled out from the region after the active phase of Chechnya campaign

⁷⁵ Short for "Vnutrenniye Voiska" (Interior Troops)

The total strength of Russian forces in Chechnya alone comprises up to 70,000 servicemen. Slowly, army motor rifle units are being replaced with special operations detachments and Interior Ministry units. This also affects the command and control structure of these troops,⁷⁶ which are getting more decentralized and efficient.

Additionally, there are 3,500 Russian troops stationed in Armenia, and 3,000 troops in Georgia. Overall, of their total 17,150 forces abroad, 6,500 are stationed in Armenia and Georgia (and 7,500 in Tajikistan). Also, of the overall number of 2,630 “peacekeepers”, 2,130 are stationed in Georgia’s two separatist regions: 530 in South Ossetia and 1,600 in Abkhazia⁷⁷.

Altogether, 5,130 Russian troops are stationed inside Georgia. In addition to these forces, there are 5,000 equally trained and equipped troops of Abkhaz separatists, and 2,000 troops of South Ossetian separatists (Separatists’ trainings are normally directed by Russian officers). The contingent in Armenia is supported by 74 T-72 tanks, 17 APCs, 84 artillery pieces and an air defense squadron comprising 18 MIG-29 interceptors and two S-300 surface-to-air missile batteries. The MIG-29s have been used to perform reconnaissance missions in Chechnya and Georgia's Pankisi Gorge. The deployment in Georgia includes 65 T-72 tanks, 200 APCs and several transport helicopters⁷⁸.

Apart from these numbers, if necessary, Russia can quickly reinforce its positions through its bases in the region. Apart from abovementioned three bases in Armenia (Gyumri base) and Georgia (Akhalkalaki and Batumi bases), Russia possesses a base in Gudauta (Abkhazia) which Moscow claims to have closed, a claim that is disputed. It is also very interesting, that in Georgia, Russia has set up its bases exclusively in potentially separatist regions: Batumi base is located in the autonomous (former separatist) republic of Adjara; the Akhalkalaki base is located near the Armenian border where the population is predominantly ethnic Armenian; and the Gudauta base is located in

⁷⁶ Armed Forces, Russian Federation, in: *Jane's Online*: <http://www.janes.com> (accessed: March 29, 2005)

⁷⁷ “Georgia” in: *Military Balance*, Volume 103, issue 2003-2004, The International Institute of Strategic Studies: 73

⁷⁸ Armed Forces, Russian Federation, in: *Jane's Online*: <http://www.janes.com> (accessed: March 29, 2005).

Abkhazia, another autonomous republic of Georgia, and Gudauta itself has the most dense ethnic Abkhazian population.

In March 2005, when Georgian parliament adopted the resolution about Russians withdrawing from the bases, the ethnic Armenian population of Akhalkalaki organized civilian demonstration demanding that Tbilisi allow the bases remain in Georgia “as guarantors of stability”, and that the government would acknowledge the Armenian genocide of 1915.⁷⁹ These events were perceived by Georgian authorities as clear warnings of how Russia can escalate situations again, and the scenario was fairly the same as it was 15 years ago, with the fortunate difference being that Tbilisi had an civilized reaction this time.

All in all, it can be said that Russia still has very significant military capabilities in the Caucasus, and Georgia in particular. And, although it is less likely that Russia engages in direct military confrontation with Georgia, their bases pose a serious threat to the stability of the country.

⁷⁹ Akhalkalaki Residents Rally Against Pullout of Russian Base: Civil Georgia Online-Magazine, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=9329> (accessed: March 13, 2005)

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III. GEORGIAN NATIONAL INTERESTS, CIRCUMSTANCES, AND STRATEGY

A. GEORGIA'S NATIONAL INTERESTS

As was noted in the introduction, Georgia has not adopted any strategic documents so far. During the last ten years, several drafts of the National Security Strategy and National Military Doctrine were written, but none of them were ever officially issued by the government. Today, Georgia's new administration has launched another round of preparation of these documents, but they have yet to be finalized. Therefore, this thesis cannot rely on any such document while discussing the national security strategy of Georgia.

Following the most modern approach in political science, one would start with developing a constructivist view and address such issues as social preferences, definition of Georgian identity, influence of different transnational and international institutions on Georgian policy-making, etc. Such investigation would be very interesting and of course valuable to any research. For this thesis, social issues will be interesting to the extent to which they affect the security and current interests of the state, understood here as unitary decision-maker, an already realized end-product of the domestic and international constructions. In other words, it is assumed here that interaction between Georgian society and the state is mostly established and it is embodied in the policies of the Georgian government.

The population separatist regions of Georgia do not participate in the political life of the country, and they do not directly affect the decision-making process of the central government. Of course, they affect the process indirectly, by shaping security calculations of the Georgian authorities but their "participation" does not go beyond that. It is conceivable that in future, as the process of conflict resolution progresses, Tbilisi will have to take into account opinion of local populations but on this stage it is simply impossible because majority of separatist populations (whatever remained after expelling ethnic Georgians from their homes) is against Georgia at all.

Martha Finnemore writes, "States do not always know what they want. They and the people in them develop perceptions of interest and understandings of desirable

behavior from social interactions with others in the world they inhabit.”⁸⁰ This must largely be a correct observation, and this may also mean that a state must address required policies to ensure that the society is not badly affected by the processes that surround it. A state might also calculate preferable bearing points for the society, advertise correct values, and educate accordingly. This does not mean, of course, that a state must act separate from society, but if the general order from society to the state is security and development, a state may try to act as a manager and ensure that the demands of a society are met. Openness of policies and constant contact and consulting with society must ensure that a state will not transform into some kind of dictatorship.

This thesis assumes that the Georgian state and society need territorial integrity; that preferences of Georgian society are set on a strong and prosperous state; and that the society looks for an acceptable position in the system of international relations. These are more than assumptions because they are the goals articulated many times by different Georgian officials, including the President of the country,⁸¹ who enjoyed support of almost 96% of the electorate (only small part of the population of separatist regions participated in these elections⁸²) in the elections of March 2004.

Accordingly, this part of the thesis looks at those concrete impediments that the Georgian state would have to eliminate to achieve security. The primary national interest of Georgia here is understood as its goal to transform from the fragmented territory into some truly unitary actor, and provide prosperity for its population.

For a war-torn country like Georgia, social unity is an issue of crucial importance. In fact, all problems of Georgia find their origins in the social and ethnic fragmentation of the country. The behavior of the state is traditionally determined by the fear of separatism and mistrust of different minorities of the country. This can be reasonably explained by external factors, namely that Russia still plays the role of “alternative

⁸⁰ Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996): 128

⁸¹ Mikhail Saakashvili, “Remarks On the Occasion of the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly,” <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/561/17/PDF/N0256117.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed: April 3, 2005)

⁸² In South Ossetia, there are several villages populated by ethnic Georgians and they mostly participated in the elections, precincts were open in these villages; In Abkhazia, the population of Gali District, where the small part of ethnic Georgian population has returned after the conflict, also participated in the elections but to vote, they had to come to neighboring Zugdidi district where the precincts were arranged for them.

authority” in the region. As for the willingness of some of Georgia’s minorities to cooperate with Russia instead of Tbilisi, they also have their reasons. First of all, the administrative “reach” of Moscow ensured that members of former Soviet “nomenclatura” became drivers of separatist discourse of these minorities. But even without Moscow’s help, an organizational view of the problem would suggest that segments of the collapsed Soviet regime would attempt to bite off as much as they could. Mistakes on the Georgian side in the early 1990s led to wars that could have been avoided. Insufficient integration of Georgia in the international community and lack of the proper education of the then-leaders of the country were the reasons for failure. Now the problem is even more difficult because during the last fifteen years of turmoil, the mistrust towards minorities, and vice versa, has deepened even farther in the society.

Despite early errors by central authorities, external (Russian) influence in the separatist regions is the major impediment towards the integration of the separated societies. Russia openly violates Georgian sovereignty and does everything possible to cut Tbilisi’s outreach to those regions. As it will be shown below, apart from supporting separatist administrations, to achieve its goals, Moscow also leverages several other non-states such as diasporas, criminal groups and business circles. The fact that Ossetian and Abkhazian “diasporas” are largely comprised of Russian citizens makes Russian strategy even more capable.

As previously stated, Russia is the major constraining factor for Georgia’s sovereignty, and problems of territorial integrity are also associated with Moscow, particularly with Russian military presence in the country. In other words, the primary interest of Georgia is to change its status in its relations with Russia. Tbilisi must ensure that it becomes an equal partner in these relations, and that conditions of mutual trust are created.

Georgia is located in the region that historically, during the last two centuries, had been largely viewed as the area of “natural” influence of Russia. After the end of the Cold War, the situation began to change gradually but dramatically. The influence of the United States in the region today is so significant that Russia is challenged in its own neighborhood. The society of Georgia largely supports the idea of the “westernization” of the country, and one of the main reasons for this is that the society understands that the

only way to be respected and accepted in the international community is direct integration with Europe and the United States.

Thus, another vital interest of Georgia is to develop such capabilities that would enable Georgia to resist possible and existing regional threats, and following this point, it is also an interest for Georgia to add to its strategic worth in the region, and to become the “key location” for the future of the Caspian-Caucasian region at large. However, to solve its own security dilemma, Georgia must do so without exacerbating Russia’s security dilemma. The ways and means to achieve these ends will be discussed next in this chapter.

B. CIRCUMSTANCES: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS INFLUENCING GEORGIA’S SECURITY

As days go by, the definition of “nation” itself gets more and more difficult, and it is even more challenging to define what the security of a nation-state is. This task becomes particularly complex when one speaks about the newly emerged states of the post-Soviet space, because ethnically diverse communities often do not coincide with the borders of these new states, and these communities have not developed (or have lost) any common “national” consciousness. For these and other reasons addressed below, this thesis elaborates on the security of the Georgian State as it emerged from the collapsed Soviet Union and as it continues to exist in the current international relations. The main task of this chapter is to assess possible ways for achieving security of Georgia and to look at opportunities that would allow Georgia, to transform into a sovereign international actor, and to prosper. In other words, for this thesis, and this chapter in particular, it is important to look at the factors impeding the Georgian security and development, on both internal and external stages.

1. Internal Factors Influencing Georgia’s Security

After the Soviet breakup and the intensification of ethnic feelings throughout almost all former Soviet republics, Georgia stood in the avant-garde of these nationalist movements determined by the drive of the Georgian people for independence. An aggression that was initially directed towards communist leaders took an anti-Russian and, over time, purely nationalistic character. Nationalist feelings were growing among

ethnic minorities of Georgia, and after almost four years (1989-1992) of tension, this resulted in the ethnic conflict in Abkhazia,⁸³ the northwest part of Georgia. Distinct clashes, with approximately 1,500 casualties, also occurred in South Ossetia, another separatist region of Georgia.

a. Abkhazia

The population of Abkhazia was around 525,000 by 1989. During the conflict of 1992-1993, some 250,000 ethnic Georgians fled the region.⁸⁴ According to a 1989 census, Abkhazians comprised just 17.8 percent of the region, while Georgians accounted for 45.7 percent. The rest of the population was mainly represented by Armenians (14.6%) and Russians (14.3%)⁸⁵. After the conflict, the population of the region reduced by some 300,000, where Abkhazians are representing the largest ethnic group of about 100,000.

In the first phase of the conflict, Georgian troops had already secured almost all major cities of Abkhazia when Russia initiated mediation for the ceasefire. The sides agreed, but the Abkhazians soon broke the agreement. And after several months of fighting, the Georgians were entirely expelled from the region. The Georgian side constantly asserts that Moscow deceived Georgians by the ceasefire agreement while they aided Abkhazians. But whatever the reason, Georgians were driven out and the conflict formally ended when, on December 1, 1993, under UN auspices and Russian mediation, Georgian and Abkhaz representatives signed the "memorandum of understanding" on ending the war in Abkhazia.⁸⁶ Among other measures, the agreement stipulated the stationing of international observers in Abkhazia, and the return of all refugees who fled the region during the course of the fighting.⁸⁷

⁸³ Chronology for Abkhazians in Georgia, in: *Minorities at Risk (MAR)*, <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/chronology.asp?groupId=37201> (accessed: November 16, 2004)

⁸⁴ Ibid

⁸⁵ Ethnic divisions in Abkhazia during the Soviet era (1920-1989), in: *Global IDP Database*, <http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/idpSurvey.nsf/SearchResults/EB96558305EA1FECC12568960050AF00?OpenDocument> (accessed: February 9, 2005)

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ *Minorities at Risk (MAR)*, 2004, <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/chronology.asp?groupId=37201> (accessed: November 16, 2004)

In May 1994, the UN-sponsored negotiations sanctioned deployment of a CIS peacekeeping force (CISPKF) made up of Russian troops. The CISPKF still patrols the Abkhaz-Georgian conditional border, and is observed by the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG).⁸⁸

The situation has been stuck on that point. Russian peacekeepers are, in fact, just the dividers between the sides, while playing a very destructive role in the conflict. Namely, they do not react to Abkhazians oppressing the Georgian population in the Gali district of Abkhazia, where a part of ethnic Georgians returned after the conflict. But more importantly, Russian “peacekeepers” became the tool of Moscow’s coercive policy towards Georgia, granting Russian decision-makers freedom of action in Abkhazia.⁸⁹

In order to acquire new tools of pressure on the Georgian government, Moscow grants Russian citizenship to the population of Abkhazia, and then claims that Moscow has legitimate rights and an obligation to protect their citizens and thus interferes as a side in the conflict-resolution process.⁹⁰

The business interests of different Russian officials certainly play an important role,⁹¹ which became especially visible during the last presidential elections in Abkhazia, when two main candidates pursued common views about Abkhaz independence from Georgia or integrating into the Russian Federation. However, Moscow favored just one candidate who was part of the corrupt clan of the former president and would change nothing in the domestic affairs of Abkhazia if elected. Moscow miscalculated, and even though they managed to negotiate repeated elections, the winner of the first two rounds, Sergey Bagapsh, won again. Moscow managed to

⁸⁸ United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) Official Website: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unomig> (accessed: April 23, 2005)

⁸⁹ Detailed *analysis* about Russian “peacekeeping” in Abkhazia, see: Dov Lynch, *Russian Peacekeeping Strategies in the CIS: the cases of Moldova, Georgia and Tajikistan* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000)

⁹⁰ Jim Nichol, “Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia: Political Developments and Implication for U.S. Interests,” in: *CRS Issue Brief for Congress*, January 19, 2005, (received through the CRS Web)

⁹¹ Theresa Freese, “Abkhazia: At War With Itself,” in: *Eurasia Insight*, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/pp120304.shtml> (accessed: March 20, 2005)

appoint their protégée as the prime minister of Abkhazia and is still trying to acquire control of “power-ministries” in the separatist republic.⁹²

Tbilisi possesses few tools in Abkhazia, which include mainly the IDP issue and shared views throughout international community about the intangibility of Georgian borders. Officially, the Kremlin shares this view as well. Another very significant issue is that Abkhazia is an uncontrolled territory with an extremely poor population with small arms circulating without restriction. The Abkhazian unrecognized administration is not represented in international affairs. Moreover, they might benefit from the weapon-trade for themselves. Russia is not able and not willing to control the small arms in the region because it was precisely Russia who provided those weapons initially, and continues to do so.⁹³ On the other hand, their influence in Abkhazia is de facto, not de jure, and so they won't take any responsibility about Abkhazian internal affairs. Tbilisi is also unable to provide any guarantees because it cannot extend control to these territories. However, Tbilisi constantly articulates concerns about arms, drugs, and human trafficking in the conflict zones.⁹⁴

Besides small arms, the fate of 2 kg HEU (Highly Enriched Uranium) formerly kept in the Soviet Institute of Physics and Technology of Sokhumi, the capital city of Abkhaz, remains unknown⁹⁵. Additionally, while most of the staff of the institute migrated in Tbilisi during the conflict, the institute still remains operational and there are reports that some of its laboratories conduct secret research.⁹⁶ There have been several accusations from Tbilisi that Abkhazia is selling HEU to terrorists, but Abkhazia fiercely

⁹² Georgian MFA Slams Moscow for Interfering in Abkhazia, in: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, 01.13.2005

⁹³ Method of Funding, in: Abkhazia, in: *Jane's Online*: <http://www.janes.com> (accessed: March 29, 2005) Membership and Support, Abkhazia Separatists, in: *Jane's Online*: <http://www.janes.com> (accessed: March 29, 2005)

Arms Seized in South Ossetia, in: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=7280> (accessed: July 19, 2004) Georgia Seizes Russian Arms Convoy in South Ossetia: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, 07.07.2004

⁹⁴ Mikhail Saakashvili, “Remarks On the Occasion of the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly,” <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N02/561/17/PDF/N0256117.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed: April 3, 2005)

⁹⁵ “Georgia, Facilities” in: *NTI (Nuclear Threat Initiative)*: <http://www.nti.org/db/nisprofs/georgia/vekua.htm>, (accessed: March 20, 2005)

⁹⁶ Ibid

denies this. Consequently, Tbilisi offered joint monitoring of the facility, but this offer remained without response from the Abkhazian side. Later, the Russian newspaper “Atompressa” reported that highly skilled professionals from the Sokhumi Institute were transferred to the newly established plant in Dubna, Russia, and that the Sokhumi plant was shut down. But, as the NTI (Nuclear Threat Initiative) reports, there is no evidence whatsoever that such a plant at Dubna really exists, and thus the question remains obscure.⁹⁷

The human rights issue is also very important. Several reports about the mistreatment and humiliation of ethnic Georgians continue to arrive from Abkhazia. But the IDP issue is the most important problem for Tbilisi. The IDP problem is exceptionally painful for Abkhazian rulers also, because on the one hand, they cannot overtly and decisively deny rights of simple people to return to their homes, but on the other hand, if they allow ethnic Georgians back in the region, then the ethnic balance will become favorable to Tbilisi, and the Abkhaz separatist administration will be easily overthrown by democratic elections.

The Gali district of Abkhazia (Figure 3), which is adjacent to the rest of Georgia, is populated mainly by ethnic Georgians. After conflict, some 60,000 ethnic Georgians returned to their homes, nearly 30,000 on a permanent basis. However, despite the presence of the UNOMIG and Russian “peacekeeping”, abductions, ambushes, the use of landmines, and robberies continue to affect the population.⁹⁸ Besides, the rights of Abkhazia’s present-day ethnic Georgian minority are severely abused, Georgian language is prohibited in local schools, and they are treated with exceptional brutality by Abkhaz militia. It was only in 2004 that the ethnic Georgian population was allowed to vote in local “elections”.

⁹⁷ “Georgia, Facilities” in: *NTI (Nuclear Threat Initiative)*:
<http://www.nti.org/db/nisprofs/georgia/vekua.htm>, (accessed: March 20, 2005)

⁹⁸ “Patterns of Return and Resettlement”, in: *IDPs in Georgia*, Global IDP Database.
<http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/IdpProjectDb/idpSurvey.nsf/WebIDPLevel2?ReadForm&Country=Georgia&s=Patterns+of+Return+and+Resettlement> (accessed: March 07, 2005)

Figure 3. Georgia/Abkhazia



Thus, the phenomenon of Abkhazian separatism can be briefly described in terms of initial ethnic cleansing and consequent discrimination against the returned ethnic Georgian population; large numbers of IDP to be returned in the region; uncontrolled weapons; uncertainty regarding HEU; and subsequent illegitimacy of local authorities. Extensive external (Russian) support is the factor determining the viability of Abkhazian separatism, but this doesn't mean that eliminating this factor would completely resolve the problem. Georgian authorities will have to ensure that integration motivations emerge in the Abkhazian society itself. Return of IDPs, restoration of normal relations between simple people and sensible economic growth of Georgia will be utmost requirements for such motivations to emerge.

b. South Ossetia

Since 1989, responding to the anti-communist rhetoric of the Georgian administration, South Ossetian leaders adopted a strongly pro-Soviet stance.⁹⁹ The same year, “The Popular Front of South Ossetia”, also called “Adamon Nykhas”, was established by local activists. Their political agenda and activities were advertised by “Izvestia”, an official organ of the USSR government. The initial dispute started over a language issue, when Nykhas demanded that, in the region, Russian language is granted the same status as Georgian. Ossetian language was not an issue, though. Tbilisi conformed to these demands. After this, Nykhas started demanding an increase in the degree of autonomy from an Autonomous District to an Autonomous Republic. Their maximum goal, however, was declared as separation from Georgia and unification with Russia, namely the Russian autonomous republic of North Ossetia. These demands were viewed with serious suspicions among ethnic Georgians.

The first violent clashes appeared in November 1989, when a number of Georgians protested in Tskhinvali, the central city of South Ossetia, against separatist movements of Ossetians. Injuries numbered twenty on both sides, though no deaths were reported.¹⁰⁰

By the end of November 1989, 1,000 Soviet Interior troops took position around Tskhinvali to guard against repeated clashes; Georgians perceived this as the annexation of the region by Russia. In response, in 1990, Georgian president Gamsakhurdia abolished the autonomous status of the region in 1991. The inter-ethnic conflict, which emerged in 1991, was not particularly intensive, and it lasted until mid-1992. Occasional clashes continued in 1994, resulting in a number of deaths and injuries on the both sides.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Data about South Ossetian Separatism Derived From: Chronology for Abkhazians in Georgia, in: *Minorities at Risk (MAR)*, <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/chronology.asp?groupId=37201> (accessed: November 16, 2004); International Crisis Group, “Conflict History: Georgia,” http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?action=conflict_search&l=1&t=1&c_country=42 (accessed: December 20, 2004)

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

¹⁰¹ Ibid

In November 1992, the South Ossetian parliament voted to separate from Georgia and join Russia. In the same year, Russian “peacekeepers” exercised their mandate in the region following the so-called “Dagomisi Agreement” between Georgia and Russia.¹⁰²

Figure 4. Georgia’s Autonomies¹⁰³



In 1994, a Russian, Georgian, North Ossetian, and South Ossetian quadripartite commission was set up to negotiate settlements of disputes, but no real advancement has been achieved since then. In 1997, the OSCE office was set up in Tskhinvali.¹⁰⁴

The South Ossetian economy heavily depends on smuggling goods from Russia into Georgia. In early 2004, Georgian authorities managed to shut down the

¹⁰² The document archive available at the website of The Regionalism Research Center (RRC)

¹⁰³ GlobalSecurity.Org, “Georgia Maps”, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/georgia/images/georgia-area.gif> (accessed: May 2, 2005)

¹⁰⁴ IDPs in Georgia, in: *Global IDP Database*, National and International Responses, <http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/IdpProjectDb/idpSurvey.nsf/WebIDPLevel2?ReadForm&Country=Georgia&Level=3> (accessed: March 3, 2005)

Ergneti market, which was the main trading point for smuggled goods, including drugs, weapons and stolen cars. This led to the intensification of ethnic tensions between Ossetians and Georgians, and even resulted in armed clashes with over a dozen casualties on both sides. South Ossetia has virtually no natural resources and no infrastructure. Its economy is predominantly agricultural and products are for local consumption. Small pensions, along with Russian passports, are provided from Moscow.¹⁰⁵

According to some estimates, nearly 30,000-40,000 refugees from South Ossetia live in Ingush refugees' houses in North Ossetia, and overall, 60,000 Ossetians have been displaced from their homes. This means that the population of the region has been reduced to some 40,000 from its initial size of 99,700. Return to South Ossetia has also been limited despite the 1992 ceasefire. Security concerns, as a result of the criminal situation and continued tensions between Georgia and Russia, are the main restraints to refugee return. The poor economic situation of the region is another reason for deterring displaced people from returning home.¹⁰⁶

The single connection of South Ossetia with Russia goes through the Roki tunnel. Russian weapons and guerrillas illegally penetrate the region through this tunnel, which is not controlled by either the Georgian side or by any international organization. The tunnel is controlled on the Georgian side by Russians and Ossetians, and it is used for massive contraband, arms, and drug trafficking, as well as for the covert delivery of Russian military supplies to South Ossetian separatists. Tbilisi requests that the joint and international control of the tunnel be undertaken with the participation of the OSCE, but for logical reasons Ossetians and Russians deny such a possibility.¹⁰⁷

South Ossetia is a mountainous area with narrow passes and an underdeveloped communications' infrastructure. Ethnic Ossetian population is almost evenly distributed throughout the region, while ethnic Georgians live predominantly in

¹⁰⁵ IDPs in Georgia, in: *Global IDP Database*, National and International Responses, <http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/IdpProjectDb/idpSurvey.nsf/WebIDPLevel2?ReadForm&Country=Georgia&Level=3> (accessed: March 3, 2005)

¹⁰⁶ Ibid

¹⁰⁷ Vladimir Socor, "Russia Rejects Wider OSCE Role in South Ossetia," in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Volume 1 Issue 66, http://www.jamestown.org/publications_details.php?volume_id=401&issue_id=3036&article_id=2368349 (accessed: March 30, 2005)

the central, eastern and western parts. Tbilisi more or less controls the situation in the southern and eastern parts of the region, while the Java district of South Ossetia in the northern part of the region remains totally uncontrolled. Georgian officials have emphasized many times that Russian guerrillas enjoy a safe stay in the district, but Tbilisi is unable to prove these allegations.

South Ossetian separatism is a very damaging factor to Georgia because, first of all, this affects overall stability of the country, and secondly, South Ossetia is located in the heart of Georgia, almost separating the country into two parts. Furthermore, foreign (Russian) control of the region keeps the whole of Georgia just about in the range of simple Russian mortars. The strategic importance of the region becomes even more sensitive because of the Russian military base in Southern Georgia, Akhalkalaki, located right across from the region, in approximately 30 km (20 miles) of range. If necessary, Russia can easily split the country into two parts. Most of this area represents a very high mountainous landscape, which is a natural separator of Georgia. The main road connecting western and Eastern parts of Georgia passes just along the conflict zone, through the main “military highway” of Georgia.

c. Pankisi Gorge

Pankisi Gorge is a materialization of the threat of spillover of the neighboring conflicts on Georgian territory. Pankisi Gorge is populated with ethnic Chechens who have lived there for centuries and are harmonically merged with ethnic Georgian population. They maintain their language and traditions, but virtually everybody speaks Georgian. The name of this population is not Chechens but “Kists”, which is traditional Georgian for Chechens.¹⁰⁸

The total number of Chechen refugees in the gorge by 2001 was 7,000.¹⁰⁹ They mainly lived in eight villages of Pankisi, with families of the local Kist population. Chechens in Georgia have caused many problems since then. This was reflected in the raising crime rate of the country. Several kidnappings, including political ones, after

¹⁰⁸ IDPs in Georgia, *Global IDP Database*, Profile of Internal Displacement: Georgia, [http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/IdpProjectDb/idpSurvey.nsf/\(wCountryPreviousReportsByUNID\)/F4EA8D64957EC471C1256FE000795A15/\\$file/Georgia+March+2004.pdf](http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/IdpProjectDb/idpSurvey.nsf/(wCountryPreviousReportsByUNID)/F4EA8D64957EC471C1256FE000795A15/$file/Georgia+March+2004.pdf), (accessed: March 5, 2005)

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

Chechen resettlement, appeared to be connected with the Gorge. After 2001, Georgia underwent more severe problems as Russia started to accuse Tbilisi of sheltering Chechen rebels and used these accusations to justify bombings of the Georgian territories and demanding that Russian Special Forces be allowed to operate inside Georgia. Russian intensive bombings of Georgian villages in 2002 resulted in three deaths and seven severe injuries.¹¹⁰ As bombings and violation of Georgian air space continued during the following years, it seriously affected the popularity of the Georgian government, as the population viewed the government as unable to solve elementary problems.

On September 11, 2002, Russian President Putin sent a letter to the UN Security Council, the UN Secretary General and the OSCE, informing the world of possible military operations in the Georgian territory and confirming orders to the Russian military to start necessary preparations for the attack.¹¹¹ As mentioned in the previous chapter, instead of conforming Russian demands, the Georgian government called upon the United States to provide assistance in training troops for anti-terrorist operations. This resulted in the “Georgian Train and Equip Program” (GTEP), which has been funded and provided by the United States since 2002.

The same year, under the pretext of cleaning up the Pankisi Gorge of alleged Chechen fighters and of preventing Russian military involvement in its territory, the Georgian government moved interior troops to the Pankisi Gorge. At the same time, the Ministry of Defense, with support of the U.S. government and U.S. military advisers, launched military training of antiterrorist groups near the Pankisi Gorge. Russian officials, however, declared that the implementation of an antiterrorist campaign in the Pankisi Gorge was only possible with the military participation of Russia.¹¹²

The situation in Pankisi remains relatively calm at present. Because Russia dislikes the U.S. military assistance to Georgia that already consists of two large programs with an overall budget of above \$130 million, Moscow chose to refrain from

¹¹⁰ International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF): “Chechen Refugees in Georgia - Pankisi Gorge and Akhmeta,” http://www.ihf-hr.org/documents/doc_summary.php?sec_id=3&d_id=191, (accessed: March 30, 2005)

¹¹¹ Ibid

¹¹² Ibid

earlier claims that Georgia was sheltering Chechen terrorists, demanding that the United States stop the GTEP. The GTEP program stopped but it continued by the “Sustainment and Stability Operations Program” (SSOP).¹¹³

Pankisi Gorge remains the issue of highest importance for Georgia. On the one hand, the goal of the government is to keep normal relations with the neighboring Chechen population and to try to secure their lives and rights. On the other hand, Georgia must ensure that there are no rebels or terrorists among Chechen refugees, and that they pose no threat to Russia.

d. Other Minorities

Georgia is known for its multiethnic population. Although ethnic Georgians comprise more than 70% of the country, Abkhazians, Ossetians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, and Greeks also constitute large ethnic groups. The problem of the ethnic minorities of Georgia is mainly connected with their territorial concentration that creates the risk of separatism. Besides Abkhazians, who are endemic population of Georgia, and Ossetians, who have migrated to Georgia during last several centuries, Armenians and Azerbaijanis live in areas adjacent respectively to Armenia and Azerbaijan.¹¹⁴ The Azerbaijani population does not reveal any separatist aspirations, a fact largely determined by friendly relations between Georgia and Azerbaijan. The Armenian population lives mainly in two towns of southern Georgia across the Armenian border, in the Javakheti district. Yet, their articulated demand is not separation from Georgia but more rights of self-governance.¹¹⁵

It is already an established tradition that as soon as some serious problem arises in Georgian-Russian relations, Russian mass media gets very enthusiastic in encouraging misunderstanding between Georgia's ethnic groups. But, in fact, a devastated economic condition of Javakheti determines that there are serious problems

¹¹³ United States European Command (USEUCOM): “Operations and Initiatives”, <http://www.eucom.mil/english/Operations/main.asp>, (accessed: April 23, 2004)

¹¹⁴ Demography, Georgia, in: *Jane's Online*, <http://www.janes.com>, (accessed: March, 3, 2005)

¹¹⁵ Akhalkalaki Residents Rally Against Pullout of Russian Base: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=9329>, (accessed: April 22, 2005) Nana Tsereteli, Problems of Civil Integration of Ethnic Minorities in Georgia, 2005, http://www.civil.ge/eng/article_ngo.php?id=9695, (last accessed: April.30.2005)

even without Russian encouragement. Javakheti is the least developed part of Georgia, with virtually no industry and no economy. The main source of income for the local population is the Russian military base in Akhalkalaki. Besides, seasonal workers travel to Russia and send money back to their families in Javakheti. Roads are in such bad condition that communication with Tbilisi is harder than with Yerevan; television broadcasts are in Armenian and the population doesn't fully understand Georgian. Russian and Armenian currencies and the U.S. dollar are the only forms of currency found in Javakheti. Local businessmen are even unsure about official exchange rates of Georgian Lari, and all schools are dominated by Armenian-language instruction.¹¹⁶

Tbilisi surely realizes that the problem exists, and Georgian authorities try to solve the problem in the context of relations with Armenia and proper social policies in the region. When locals revealed their worries in 2005, Georgian President Saakashvili declared that he wouldn't allow the population to be badly affected by any changes. He also declared that the Russian base will be substituted with the Georgian one, and every single person now employed by the Russian base will be offered a job by the Georgian one.¹¹⁷ Besides, to stress warm relations with Georgia,¹¹⁸ Armenian President Kocharyan visited Tbilisi and held meetings with the President, the Prime Minister, and the Chairwoman of Parliament of Georgia. He also met with representatives of Armenian minority and by the end of the visit, Georgian and Armenian authorities declared that Georgian-Armenian relations are very significant not only for the two States but for the entire region as well.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ External Affairs, Armenia in: *Jane's Online*, <http://www.janes.com>, (accessed: March, 3, 2005)

¹¹⁷ Saakashvili Pledges Jobs to Locals in Akhalkalaki after Base Pullout: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=9739>, (accessed: April 28, 2005)

¹¹⁸ Armenia, being in territorial conflict with Azerbaijan and having tensions with Turkey, is placed in geographical blockade between Azerbaijan and Turkey. Georgia is the only connection for them with Russia, and Armenia is particularly cautious in its relations with Georgia. Armenia and Russia are strategic partners.

¹¹⁹ Kocharyan Meets Zhvania, Burjanadze: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=8152>, (accessed: October 23, 2004) Saakashvili, Kocharyan Hold Talks: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=8148>, (accessed: October 22, 2004)

It can thus be said that while no real threat has been revealed so far, by indifference to the issue, it can easily redevelop into a real problem. Of course, Georgia will not be able to bear another separatist “front” on its territory.

Figure 5. Russian Military Presence and Minorities in Georgia¹²⁰



e. Russian Military Bases in Georgia

In 1994, Georgia’s former President Shevardnadze signed a treaty with Russia allowing the presence of three Russian bases in Georgia.¹²¹ In 1995, the fourth base was added to the previous treaty and the term of their presence was extended to 25 years. The terms were not ratified by the Georgian parliament. In 1999, the Defense and Security Committee of the Georgian parliament requested closure of the Vaziani and Gudauta bases, stating that Vaziani base nearby Tbilisi was involved in illegal arms trade and was sheltering terrorists; and the Gudauta base in Abkhazia contributed to sustaining

¹²⁰ The map is created by the author, for illustration purpose

¹²¹ External Affairs, Georgia, in: *Jane’s Online*, <http://www.janes.com>, (accessed: March, 3, 2005)

the conflict with Abkhazia. Consequently, at the OSCE Istanbul summit of 1999, the closure of these two bases was agreed upon.¹²²

The Vaziani base was closed, after being vandalized by Russia, in 2001. Closure of the Gudauta base, though, was more complicated. Russia negotiated Georgia's permission to convert the base into a peacekeepers' support-structure, but this was continually rejected by Tbilisi. As permission was not finally given, Abkhazian de facto authorities tried to link the region's status to the issue of the Russian base. Later in 2001, Abkhazians staged a blockade of the base, urging Moscow to keep the base in the region. They claimed to gain control of Russian military hardware if their demands would not be met.¹²³ With some obvious and fortunate differences, the situation resembled the one currently developing in Javakheti.

Moscow declares that it has withdrawn personnel and all the heavy equipment from the base, but international observers cannot verify these assertions. Tbilisi accuses Russia of having stored the hardware in the caves and tunnels of Abkhazia, or handed them over to local militia. Tbilisi also asserts that up to 500 Russian military personnel still remain on the base. The base itself is retained by Russia as a "relaxation centre" for Russian "peacekeepers" which serve in the region. It is believed that the Gudauta base comprises the largest air base in the South Caucasus, and it is also believed that Russia maintains one secret base in Eshera, near Sokhumi. In a word, having been unable to secure Georgian official permission to retain the base in Gudauta, it seems like Moscow decided to nonetheless retain it, illegally. It is hard, and perhaps illogical, to believe that in the absence of international control, Moscow would really close the base, which was one of the main instruments of Kremlin's policy in the region.

The final date of closure of the Akhalkalaki and Batumi bases is another issue of discord between Tbilisi and Moscow. At the Istanbul summit, Russia declared that they would close these two bases too, but the exact date was not articulated. Initially, Moscow demanded 14 years for their final closure and during 5 years that passed the term was "reduced" to 7-8 years.

¹²² External Affairs, Georgia, in: *Jane's Online*, <http://www.janes.com>, (accessed: March, 3, 2005)

¹²³ Abkhazians Obstruct Russian Militaries' Withdrawal From Gudauta: Civil Georgia Online Magazine, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=501>, (accessed: March 2, 2005)

Tbilisi now insists that 2006 be the final year of Russian presence. In early March 2005, Georgian Parliament adopted the resolution¹²⁴ declaring that either the final date will be negotiated by May, or Georgia would outlaw the Batumi and Akhalkalaki bases and cut off their energy supplies.

Today, Russian military deployment in Georgia includes approximately 65 T-72 tanks, 200 APCs, 272 bridge launchers, 140 artillery pieces above 100mm, and several transport helicopters.¹²⁵ Overall strength is above 3,000, and in Akhalkalaki, some 1,400 locals are involved in work for the 147th Motorized Rifle Brigade.

Finally, it can be said that all Russian military bases in Georgia bear a similar philosophy, and besides their purely military value, Moscow successfully leverages them for political means. The three bases, except the Vaziani base in Tbilisi which is already closed, are located in potential and materialized separatist regions. Through their bases, Russians establish close ties with ethnic minorities, and leverage them to maintain military presence in the region. Thus, Russian military bases are final, although vicious, remnants of Russian presence in the South Caucasus and in Georgia in particular. Their removal would immeasurably strengthen the security of Georgia, and would open larger opportunities for international cooperation.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that at the OSCE Istanbul Summit, the international community, and the United States in particular, strongly supported Tbilisi's policies for the removal of Russian bases. President Bush has shown his full support to Georgia in this problem.¹²⁶

2. Diaspora Support to Insurgencies in Georgia

The Resolution of the People's Assembly, Parliament of the Republic of Abkhazia, of October 20, 1997 maintains, "In this unequal struggle the Abkhazians were supported by their kin people from the North Caucasus, the South of Russia, by

¹²⁴ Parliament's Resolution Against Russian Bases: Civil Georgia Online Magazine, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=9339> (accessed: March 14, 2005)

¹²⁵ Armed Forces, Russian Federation, in: *Jane's Online*, <http://www.janes.com>, (accessed: March, 3, 2005)

¹²⁶ COM-TV.COM: "President Bush meets with Mikhail Saakashvili President of Georgia" (Video); in: *Activity of President*, <http://www.comtv.ne.jp/itv/pt.htm>, (accessed: April 4, 2005)

representatives of many countries abroad, by the Abkhazian Diaspora from Turkey, Syria, Jordan and a number of West European countries and the United States”.¹²⁷

Circassians, Adygheans, and Kabardians can be counted as Abkhaz kin as well. These people reside in the North Caucasus and have developed a common “Circassian” identity.¹²⁸ Circassians, Adygheans, Kabardians (all in Russia), and Abkhazians (in Georgia) have even claimed for some “North Caucasian Federative Republic”, and there are many reports about these people having taken part in ethnic conflict in Georgia, on Abkhaz side.

The exact number of Abkhazian diaspora is hard to figure. However, a major part of them lives in Turkey, where, due to a poor minority record, estimates fluctuate from 100,000¹²⁹ to 500,000.¹³⁰ There are approximately 250 Abkhazian villages in Turkey, and large numbers of ethnic Abkhazians also live in cities like Istanbul, Ankara, Duzce, Inegol, Bilecik, Eskishehir, Samsun and Sinop.¹³¹ Some 5,000 Abkhazians live in Syria, and much smaller communities in several other countries of the Middle East. Europe’s Abkhazian settlers mainly come from Turkey, and they live in Germany (some 3,000), the Netherlands, Belgium, France, U.K, etc. A small Abkhazian community exists in New Jersey, U.S.A., and is mostly made up of immigrants from Syria.¹³²

While there are number of facts that show Abkhazian diaspora is encouraging separatist movement, they are not particularly active. Georgia would be able to utilize its close ties with Turkey and several European friends to set up conditions favorable to diaspora. On the other hand, though, Georgia must keep the close eye on Abkhazians’ contacts with their kin in the Middle East and Syria because almost 40% of Georgia’s

¹²⁷ People's Assembly, Parliament of the Republic of Abkhazia, “Resolution of the People's Assembly - Parliament of the Republic of Abkhazia of 20 October 1997: On condemnation of facts of high treason and collaboration with the occupational authorities during the Georgian-Abkhazian war of 1992-1993”: <http://www.abkhazia.org/resolution2.html>, (accessed: April 11, 2005)

¹²⁸ The Center for Global Peace and Conflict Studies (CGPACS), Abkhazians: The People and Geographic Setting, <http://www.socsci.uci.edu/gpacs/abkhazia/people.html> (accessed: November 22, 2004)

¹²⁹ Givi Dzidzariya, *Makhadzhirstvo i problemy istorii Abkhazii XIX stoletija*, (Sukhumi: Alashara, 1982), 493

¹³⁰ Peter Overeem, Report of a UNPO coordinated human rights mission to Abkhazia and Georgia, in: *Central Asian Survey*, Volume 14, no. 1, (1995), p. 18

¹³¹ Chikirba, V. A. Georgians and Abkhazians: the Search for a Peace Settlement; in: *Publications of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel*, Department of Political Sciences, <http://poli.vub.ac.be/publi/Georgians>, (accessed: April 4, 2005)

¹³² Ibid

Abkhazian population is Muslim and the diaspora in the Middle East may easily contribute to raising fundamentalism in Abkhazian “mainland”.

3. Refugee and IDP Influence on Separatism in Georgia

As mentioned above, IDPs account for some 300,000 people from Abkhazia. From South Ossetia, there are roughly 40,000 refugees in the Russian North Ossetian republic, and some 20,000 IDPs in Georgia. IDPs play an opposite role to the refugees. They add to central government’s motivation to resolve the conflict on its terms. During recent years, many demonstrations, conferences and other open activities are held in Tbilisi by IDPs, demanding that the government ensure their safe return in homes. IDPs, apart from creating too many hard problems to the central government, are also a very strong tool addressing reunification policies, and Tbilisi well realizes this. On the other hand, Ossetian refugees do not represent any significant force, and they are very passive. So far, they haven’t developed any different identity that would be politically fertile in any circumstances.

4. Other Non-State Supporters of Separatism in Georgia

Among other non-states actors, Russian-based ethnic Abkhazian businessmen, as well as Russian businessmen who have acquired significant assets in war-destroyed Abkhazia, deserve particular attention. In South Ossetia, several Russian (often ethnic Ossetian) businessmen receive benefits from smuggling goods from Russia into Georgia. Part of the South Ossetian budget is accounted for by such smuggling.

The latest tensions between Tbilisi and Tskhinvali, the South Ossetian capital, began by Georgian authorities closing the illegal market of Ergneti and restricting smuggling routes from South Ossetia. After the Rose Revolution¹³³, new authorities of Georgia claimed that some representatives of the former administration were in criminal alliance with South Ossetian separatist leaders and earned illegal money from smuggling. New authorities banned some Russian-based firms whose products happened to be smuggled most frequently in Georgia, and who had obvious connections with separatists. One such firm was Russian beer producing giant Baltica, the President General of which,

¹³³ Public uprising against Georgian President Shevardnadze in November, 2003 was termed as “Rose Revolution”, meaning a symbol of non-violence, roses, as used by the leaders of the revolution.

Balloeov, was ethnic Ossetian and a close friend of self-proclaimed South Ossetia's President Kokoev. Balloeov, who had been Baltica's founder and a minor shareholder (1.3%), and President General during 1990–2004, disappeared from the company's shareholder and administrative list in February 2005.¹³⁴ Some commentators are indicating that Balloeov – “Putin's confidant” – can be named as a replacement to North Ossetian President Dzasokhov¹³⁵.

Georgian President Saakashvili has mentioned many times that the mayor of Moscow, Luzhkov, owns several facilities in Abkhazia. Saakashvili warned Luzhkov that without Tbilisi's permission, no property could be sold in Abkhazia, and that Tbilisi would denunciate all acquisitions after regaining control of Abkhazia. In response to these threats, Luzhkov visited Abkhazia and discussed with the de facto administration possibilities of fostering economic ties between Moscow City and Abkhazia.¹³⁶

It is interesting that Luzhkov visited Abkhazia on a private account, but discussed matters different from that status. This is, in fact, the model of fairly sophisticated present-day diplomacy of Russia, which doesn't recognize any barriers, any rules, and any established patterns of international relations. One and the same person can act in different ways, depending to the requirements of particular situation. This hazy distinction between the state and non-state actors and functions is maybe the most observable characteristic of Moscow's behavior today.

Accordingly, it must also be said that Russian-based non-state actors are fairly different elements than those known in many other parts of the world. Russian non-state actors are unofficially directed by the state. Balloeov's example is just one instance of that. Putin's policy incorporates wealthy individuals and firms in the state's tools against other states. In exchange, for the chance of work and making money in Russia, Putin demands that financial policies and other preferences of these firms be compliant to the Russian State's goals and strategic preferences. This is one of the main reasons why both state-owned and private Russian companies are often equally dangerous for Georgia.

¹³⁴ Baltika Brewery, 2005: List of Affiliate Persons (Russian), <http://invest.baltika.ru/ru/19/> (accessed: March 3, 2005)

¹³⁵ Saradzhyan, S. Oligarchs Fear Fresh Purges by Putin; in: *Free Republic*, December 26, 2004; <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1317036/posts>, (accessed: April 4, 2005)

¹³⁶ Caucasian Knot: “Moscow Government promotes economic cooperation with Abkhazia”, <http://eng.kavkaz.memo.ru/printnews/engnews/id/690696.html>; accessed: 04/04/2005

Non-state actors of other non-Russian origin, which directly or indirectly contribute to Georgia's separatist regimes, include predominantly Turkish firms and traders who ship timber and coal from Abkhazia, and also rent vessels for different purposes. According to S. Zibzibadze, a leading intelligence official of Georgia, "two or three ships belonging to private firms arrived in Sukhumi from Turkey every day. During the first Chechen campaign, Turkish ships delivered fighters to Abkhazia on their way to the North Caucasus. It's quite possible that on these ships there could be fighters, weapons, drugs, Wahhabi literature and any other kind of contraband."¹³⁷ It must not be difficult for Georgia to closely cooperate with the Turkish government on this issue.

C. GEORGIA'S RELATIVE POWER

The power of any state is made up of several forces, with military, economic, diplomatic, and informational powers being the most visible among them. Static and issue-specific powers represent the second set of definitions. Following the definition of a state's power, it must be possible to discern different strata in this game: informational, economic, diplomatic, and military layers. Additionally, it must be possible also to deconstruct the concept of Russia's power and look at the possibilities of Georgian interaction with its different segments.

1. Georgia's Military Capabilities

The "Military Balance" and SIPRI database lists 86 battle tanks; 185 ACV/AIFV; 85 artillery pieces; 16 122mm BM-16 rockets; 17 120 mm advanced mortar bombs (MOR); 15 attack helicopters; 7 attack Su 25s; 5 Su 7s; 71 surface-to-air (SAM) missiles; several training aircraft; and 20,309 manpower strength of the Georgian Army by 2003.¹³⁸ It is impossible to estimate the situation by 2005 because the military budget has increased almost four times during the last two years (FIGURE 6¹³⁹), and the Defense

¹³⁷ Tea Absaridze, Inal Khashig, "Georgians, Abkhaz Clash over Detained Ship" in: Institute of War & Peace Reporting, http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/cau/cau_200211_157_1_eng.txt, (accessed: April 4, 2005)

¹³⁸ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) "Georgia," in: *Databases*, <http://first.sipri.org> (accessed: March 29, 2005) Armed forces, weapons holdings and employment in arms production/Georgia, in: *Military Balance 2003-2004*, IISS: 73

¹³⁹ Data for 1996-2003 taken from SIPRI, *ibid*;

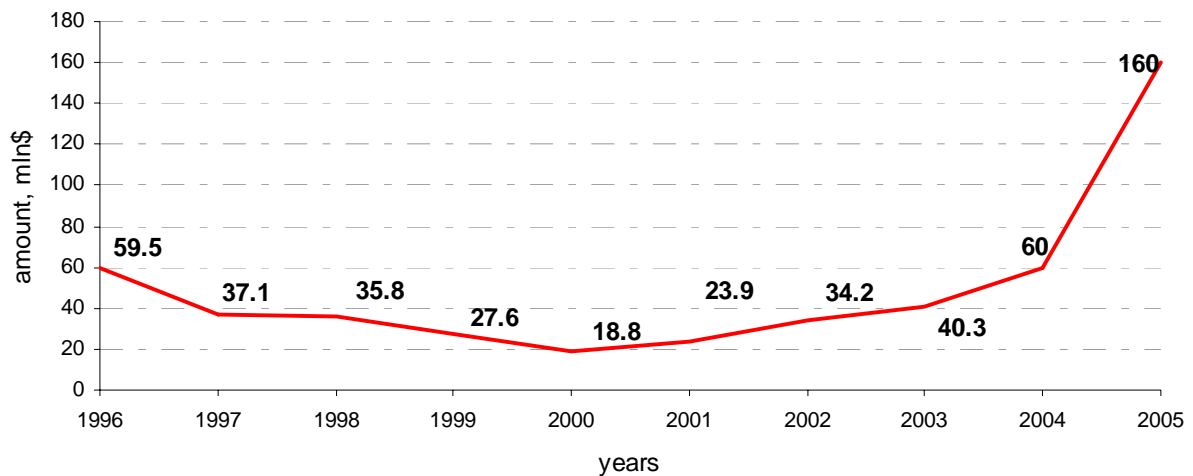
Minister of Georgia insists that all resources are being spent on additional equipment for the Army.¹⁴⁰ No open data is available so far.

Thus, the budget growth rate is considerable, but it is also clear that Georgia will find it very difficult to create military capabilities that would serve as a deterrent against Russia. However, Georgia is on its way to increasing defense capabilities, and coupled with correct strategies and diplomacy, over time Tbilisi may feel reasonably safe against the Russian threat.

Another reason why Tbilisi increases defense spending is to show to separatist regimes that peaceful negotiations, which Tbilisi grants priority in its relations with these regions, are not the only option, and that Tbilisi will be ready to consider alternative measures if needed. It is important to note that, despite its growing military strength, Tbilisi will fail to implement coercive strategies toward separatists unless Georgia is ready to coerce Russia itself. It becomes obvious that foreign assistance will be essential for Georgia as a deterrent against Russia.

¹⁴⁰ Defense Reform Poses Crucial Civil Society Test for Georgia: Civil Georgia Online Magazine, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=9555> (accessed: March 6, 2005)

Figure 6. Georgia's Military Expenditure 1996-2005 ¹⁴¹



Although it does not apply solely to the military domain, this is a clear case where the power a weak state has against a strong one is a function of another strong state's military power.¹⁴² Georgia needs something more than just its own military power to deter Russia against a major military offensive in Georgia. Thus far, though, Georgia doesn't have any military alliances other than the anti-terrorist coalition with the United States. The declared policy of Georgian authorities is that the country is preparing to join NATO, and Georgia participates in the PFP (Partnership for Peace) and PARP (Planning and Review Process) since 1994 and 1997 respectively. Currently Tbilisi is implementing the so called IPAP (Individual Partnership Action Plan) which is viewed as the premise to MAP (Membership Action Plan) for NATO. It is also noteworthy that the overall tendency in present-day Georgia is the increasing popularity of the Army, and ever growing attention of the administration to the defense affairs.

It can thus be said that Georgia is capable of acquiring military capabilities sufficient to solve problems on the local level, but Georgia cannot stop Russian backing of separatists. To address this problem, Georgia needs strong foreign support that exceeds the sphere of military cooperation. Georgia must rely on diplomacy and strategic

¹⁴¹ The data for 1996-2003 is based on SIPRI, *ibid.* For 2004-2005 see: 2005 Draft Budget Unveiled: Civil Georgia Online Magazine, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=8639> (accessed: December 22, 2004); and also: Parliament Approves Increase of Budgetary Expenditures: Civil Georgia Online Magazine: <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=8686> (accessed: May 21, 2005)

¹⁴² William M. Habeeb, *Power and Tactics in International Negotiation: How Weak Nations Bargain with Strong Nations*, (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 4

alliances for its security. However, Georgian capabilities to handle local problems will remain essential, and Tbilisi is intensively preparing for this task.

One final issue to mention here is that military capabilities are not just material resources and equipment, but also strategy and coordination of the whole military and political body of the country. In Georgia, there are very few things done in this regard so far, and the main commitment rests on acquiring additional military hardware and training more recruits. This situation also requires a solution. Planning capabilities must also be acquired and training must be conducted according to specific plans and needs. Preparation of strategic documents that would underlie the defense philosophy of the country must be an urgent task of Georgian defense authorities.

2. Georgian Diplomatic Capabilities

As W. Habeeb phrases it in the beginning of his study, “outcome [of negotiations, A.B.] is a function of each side’s power.”¹⁴³ Hence, he continues the discussion with the definition of power in asymmetrical negotiation and examines interrelation between phenomena of power and negotiation. He distinguishes three sets of theories of negotiation: game theory, concession rate/convergence theory, and psychological-behavioral approach.¹⁴⁴

Game theory needs no excessive explanations as it treats power in structural terms that simply means that rational behavior of the sides, and a power-balance, determines the outcome of negotiations. Concession rate/convergence theory deals with the “post-stalemate” situations and maintains that after stalemate, parties make concessions of some rate, and thus converge toward an outcome. Psychological-behavioral theory, as Habeeb explains, deals more with characteristics of agents than with actions.

To draw a line between static and dynamic worlds, Habeeb offers notions of structural and issue-specific powers. Aggregate structural power is defined as the collection of a side’s possessions, such as territory, population, material resources, several different capabilities, nature of frontiers, etc. Thus, while structural power is defined as an actor’s capabilities and position vis-à-vis the external environment as a

¹⁴³ William M. Habeeb, *Power and Tactics in International Negotiation: How Weak Nations Bargain with Strong Nations*, (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 1

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 11

whole, issue-specific power is determined as an actor's position and capabilities vis-à-vis another actor.¹⁴⁵ In asymmetric negotiations, paraphrasing Habeeb, a nature of interdependence of negotiating sides determines the outcome of negotiation. Available alternatives are determinants of interdependence.

These observations provided, Georgia must view its independence as non-dependence on Russia, and must view sovereignty as the ability to choose between alternatives, that is, make its own decisions. These two must be the driving principles of the Georgian foreign policy.

As it was noted in the respective chapter, Georgia heavily depends on Russia with regards to foreign trade, energy, and perspectives of conflict resolution. Consequently, in order to achieve prospects of successful negotiation/cooperation with Russia, Tbilisi must try to free itself from such dependence. If not, then Russia will never have a sense of urgency in negotiations, and they will always find it easy to wait with final resolutions, and manipulate Georgia's problems according to Moscow's strategic preferences. As said, with completion of BTC and SCP projects, Georgia will have good perspectives to end the energy-dependence on Russia. At the same time, negotiations for Iran's energy resource transfer to Georgia are also under way.¹⁴⁶ However, slow economic development and separatist conflicts remain problematic. Current authorities of Georgia took a notable pace in privatization of all remaining state-owned enterprises in the country. Foreign investors are widely welcomed and several guarantees are offered to them, but the majority of firms that are willing to invest in Georgia are of Russian origin and this is seen in Georgia as consistent with Moscow's official policies. This, in turn, creates additional reservations in the population and in the government as well. As there is almost nonexistent trust between the Georgian and Russian governments, Tbilisi doesn't believe that Russian private companies will behave as they'd be supposed to act in a normal case, nor does it believe that Moscow will not leverage private companies for its purposes. It is certain that Tbilisi must try to diversify its economic contacts as much

¹⁴⁵ William M. Habeeb, *Power and Tactics in International Negotiation: How Weak Nations Bargain with Strong Nations*, (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 19

¹⁴⁶ Iran, Georgia Consider Cooperation in Transfer of Energy, in: *Tehran Times Newspaper*, 04.19.2005, <http://www.tehrantimes.com/archives.asp> (accessed: April 20, 2005)

as possible, and create the necessary condition for attracting foreign investments in Georgia. Diversification of markets for Georgian-produced goods must be the priority for Tbilisi.

Habeb admits that a “less dependent actor in a relationship has a significant political resource.”¹⁴⁷ This characterizes Moscow’s advantage in its relations with Georgia. The problem for Tbilisi is that often Moscow does not even need to undertake any manifest offensive actions because Tbilisi depends on Moscow itself; that is, Tbilisi lacks capabilities. For example, Georgia lacks diverse sources of energy supply; until recently, it lacked policies, and lacked political connections. As a result, Georgia lacked importance internationally, and kept that importance only for those who needed it as territory. Undoubtedly, for the United States and the West at large, apart from being just a piece of land where the oil and gas pipelines would go, former President Shevardnadze was the single personification of Georgia. This situation has changed.

First of all, the value of Georgia as a territory has dramatically increased for the United States after September 9, 2001. But probably more importantly, Georgia came to symbolize democratization in the former Soviet space after its peaceful democratic revolution of 2003. During elections in the Ukraine, and now during revolutionary events in Kyrgyzstan, Tbilisi represented an example and symbol of a peaceful regime-change, and Georgians widely supported those local movements. In Moldova, overt support of Georgian President Saakashvili was very helpful to the success of the party of Moldovan President Voronin,¹⁴⁸ and it is illustrative that Georgia is the only state of the CIS that U.S. President Bush visited on May 10, 2005, after his voyage in Lithuania, Netherlands, and Moscow.¹⁴⁹ It would be illogical to expect that this historical visit will change much for Georgia, but it would be no less plausible to argue that new US interest in Georgia will have to be transformed into concrete steps and measures, and it is very important to determine what steps they must be.

¹⁴⁷ Iran, Georgia Consider Cooperation in Transfer of Energy, in: *Tehran Times Newspaper*, 04.19.2005, <http://www.tehrantimes.com/archives.asp> (accessed: April 20, 2005), p. 19

¹⁴⁸ Vladimir Socor, Moldova's Political Sea Change, in: *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, http://jamestown.org/edm/article.php?volume_id=407&issue_id=3296&article_id=2369579, (accessed: April 15, 2005)

¹⁴⁹ For Media: Georgia & USA Visit, <http://www.georgiawelcomesusa.com> (accessed: April 28, 2005)

As said, Moscow views Abkhazian and South Ossetian issues as factors of Russia's internal security. Thus, it would be reasonable to expect that the Kremlin will try to resist Western pressure and keep pressure on Tbilisi. As evidence to that, Mr. Steven Mann, Senior Advisor on Caspian Basin Energy Diplomacy of the U.S. Department of State, together with a group of U.S. diplomats, visited Abkhazia and held talks with the Abkhaz separatist leader Bagapsh about peaceful resolution of Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. The day after his briefing with President Saakashvili, the Georgian President declared that he would meet with the separatist leaders in Tbilisi during President Bush's visit there. However, Abkhaz and Ossetian leaders ruled out such a possibility, stating that Russia remains the main player in the process of conflict-resolution.¹⁵⁰

Nonetheless, as far as nobody anticipates direct confrontation with Russia, Tbilisi must create additional tools for peaceful pressure on Moscow, and ensure that its actions are coordinated with the policies of its international partners.

As for additional tools, Tbilisi must be especially careful, since dangerous escalation can severely worsen its negotiation standing. In this regard, even though Georgia is an ad hoc ally of the United States in the war on terror, its disagreement with Russia is unlikely to ever transform into the so called "extended deterrence" model of crisis management. This is because Russia is not engaging itself into a direct military conflict with Georgia, and the United States is unlikely to make explicit warnings against Moscow. Instead, the United States permanently calls for negotiations between Moscow and Tbilisi and facilitates peaceful talks.

When talking about alliances, the GUUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Moldova) alliance seems the most significant strategic alliance that Georgia has ever formed thus far. Until today, GUUAM was a rather amorphous organization which lacked a unifying philosophy and effective mechanisms of cooperation, and often was cited as still-born. It is also noteworthy that Moldova and Uzbekistan, have often expressed doubts about their membership in the organization.

¹⁵⁰ Abkhaz Leader Will Not Visit Tbilisi, in: *RIA NOVISTI*, <http://en.rian.ru/onlinenews/20050412/39698129.html>, (accessed: April 12, 2005); Also: S. Ossetia Reiterates Russia Major Mediator in Conflict Resolution, in: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*: <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=9615>, (accessed: April 16, 2005)

Uzbekistan continues to fear Moscow's overreaction and holds off the alliance, while Moldova cardinally changed its behavior since the last parliamentary elections.

Since 2000, GUUAM has developed some principles that commonly serve the interests of all member states.¹⁵¹ These principles are: joint efforts on behalf of energy production; support sovereignty and territorial integrity; oppose ethnic and religious intolerance; cooperate in the field of security; fight against illegal drugs; work with NATO, OSCE and the United Nations; and cooperate with the United States.

Recently, there is notable revitalization of the organization. On April 22, 2005, the GUUAM members intended to invite Romania into the alliance, and the President of Romania, Bashesku, has declared that its country is ready to play the role of mediator between GUUAM and NATO¹⁵². The same source admits that with Romania in GUAAM (provided that the Ukraine and Georgia are also the "Black Sea Countries" and the members of GUUAM), NATO will take full control of the Black Sea where the military balance between NATO and Russia is already 5 to 1. It is also interesting to note that at least thus far, GUUAM does not have a military dimension; its members have declared economic and strategic partnership without mentioning any military issues. In this respect, membership of the NATO component-state in the GUUAM alliance would certainly add value to GUUAM. Also worth mentioning is that the United States intends to place five military bases in Romania¹⁵³ that will farther increase the security of Romania and make it a more decisive actor in negotiations with Russia.

¹⁵¹ GUUAM official website, <http://www.guuam.org> (accessed: March 10, 2005)

¹⁵² Bulgaria, Romania Pledge Support in Georgia's EU Aspiration, in: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=9711> (accessed: April 26, 2005)

¹⁵³ US European Command Facilities, in: *GlobalSecurity.Org*, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/eucom.htm> (accessed: April 5, 2005)

Figure 7. GUUAM Map¹⁵⁴



3. Georgia's Informational Capabilities

The question about informational capabilities of Georgia is interesting more from its policy side than technologically. What policies does Georgia employ to enhance its informational standing? D. Rondfeldt and J. Arquilla in “What If There Is Revolution in Diplomatic Affairs?¹⁵⁵” write, “The information age will continue to undermine the conditions for classic diplomacy based on *realpolitik* and “hard power”, and will instead favor emergence of a new diplomacy based on what we call *noopolitic* and its preference for “soft power”. In chapter “Trends that Favor Noopolitic”, authors note: “let’s make no mistake about it. Hard power ... still counts. It is ultimate, because existential, currency of power.” The essential difference between *realpolitik* and *noopolitic*, however, lays in that if for *realpolitik* “might makes right”, and for *noopolitic* “right makes might”. The authors emphasize that growing interconnectivity of the cybersphere, emergence of a global civil society and transnational and international organizations greatly determine the growing importance of *noopolitics*. Noopolitics is determined by the authors as “an

¹⁵⁴ GUUAM official website, <http://www.guam.org> (accessed: March 10, 2005)

¹⁵⁵ David Rondfeldt, John Arquilla, “What If There is a Revolution in Diplomatic Affairs?” *United States Institute of Peace*; Virtual Diplomacy Initiative; 25 February 1999; <http://www.usip.org/virtualdiplomacy/publications/reports/ronarqISA99.html>, (accessed: April 9, 2005)

approach to diplomacy and strategy for information age that emphasizes the shaping and sharing ideas, values, norms, laws, and ethics through soft power”.

For Georgia it is important to emphasize two things: that in the information age “right makes might”, and that *noopolitics* is empowered by civil society and transnational connections. Technologically, addressing noopolitics is not a problem for Georgia even with its undersized Internet communications. Besides, there is also an “infosphere” which includes traditional means of information such as print, broadcast, and the like. Thus, it is very important, that Georgia has “right” demands and claims. In today’s Georgia, for example, few think about the moral side of the problems, and this is especially surprising because Georgia can derive many benefits from such an approach. Having minimally elaborated on this issue in the previous part, it is still important to note that creating appropriate perception of Tbilisi’s behavior, not only in domestic but also in foreign audiences, will be very beneficial for the final success of Georgian politics. Especially in Russia, Tbilisi’s policies are viewed as predatory and thus immoral, while in reality the opposite is the case. However, state-controlled Russian media deals with the assigned task with enough professionalism and Tbilisi gives no adequate response to this. Meanwhile, presenting Georgian version of developments to Russian audiences may undermine the legitimacy of actions of Moscow, and ignoring this domain will make Tbilisi lose much.

Thus, it is clear that although informational campaigns enjoy high popularity in the Georgian government, Tbilisi still lacks the proper discourse to address those who can influence its main adversary – the Kremlin. International community is very helpful to Tbilisi but Georgia still needs to intensify its efforts to win the informational ‘battles’ with Moscow.

In a word, Tbilisi must find ways to address the Russian population and for this, policymakers in Tbilisi must look at all opportunities and select proper groups within the Russian society who would concur with Tbilisi’s stance. It is clear, for example, that the Russian opposition is not being used by Tbilisi. Moscow’s democrats, although unpopular in Russia, are still in place and alive, and they seem ready to cooperate with forces outside. This was especially visible after the democratic revolution in the Ukraine, which was widely supported by Russian democratic forces. Besides, about 900,000

Georgians live and work in Russia and this resource is also underused.¹⁵⁶ After all, an older generation of Georgian writers, musicians, artists and all kinds of cultural workers are still very popular in Russia, and together with Russian colleagues, they still form one community of post-Soviet cultural elites. This resource is also abandoned. All in all, it can be said that Georgia has, but loses, significant levers to communicate to foreign audiences.

Joseph Nye writes, “The soft power of the country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority).”¹⁵⁷ In the Georgian case, cultural domain will work because Georgian ethnic culture has been widely popular among Russian cultural elites, and there is also a fairly developed Georgian mass-culture, which is also traditionally popular in the region, including Russia. However, close attention is not paid to its potential benefits by politicians. The amazing thing about Georgia is that this tiny country has always produced large amounts of quality cultural products, such mass-oriented types of culture as music and cinema. But, this resource is still completely overlooked by the state.

For informational campaigns to be successful, another factor of crucial importance is an internal situation in Georgia. Tbilisi will fail to create a success-story for external audiences if it fails to deal with the everyday problems at home. Certainly, as noted below, fast developing Georgia will be an attractive example for others.

Besides, Tbilisi needs ethical domestic and international behavior. Principled attitudes toward moral issues, impartial judgment of critical situations, and adequate behavior will strengthen Georgia’s standing internationally, and especially on the regional level. A prosperous Georgia will be more attractive for the populations of its own separatist regions, who now see no reason for contending local rulers.

¹⁵⁶ The Russian Federation: a Major Actor in the Abkhaz & South Ossetia Conflicts (2001-2005): Global IDP Database, Georgia, <http://www.db.idpproject.org/Sites/IdpProjectDb/idpSurvey.nsf/wViewCountries/421C69341627EBD3C1256BFA004B3B84>; (accessed: April 26, 2005)

¹⁵⁷ Joseph S. Nye, Jr. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 11

Finally, international and transnational institutions will play a necessary role as well. Georgia has good standing in international organizations like the UN, the OSCE, even the EU (which Georgia is not a member of), and the CE (Council of Europe). But this good standing is mainly determined by hopes of these organizations regarding a “new Georgia”, and those several changes that occurred in Georgia during the rule of the new administration. Nonetheless, actual accounts about human rights protection and different responsibilities taken before the EC when joining it in 1999 still leave them to hope for better. “The government’s reform agenda is delivering mixed results on human rights” was noted in the pretext of 2004 Human Rights Development Overview of the Human Rights Watch.¹⁵⁸ In the Freedom House account of 2005, Georgia is termed a “partly free” country.¹⁵⁹

Ensuring decisive success in the sphere of human rights and establishing democratic values throughout the country is absolutely crucial if Tbilisi wants to acquire a significant influence in international institutions. Activation of Georgia’s role in the CIS would also be a desirable issue. This question is addressed in more detail in the fourth chapter.

As for transnational links, the NGO sector can be widely employed. Joint undertakings, sharing values, views, and philosophy between non-governmental organizations of different countries of the region must become a priority for Georgian authority. Government must increase financing of the NGO sector and not rely on only international donors. The current administration of Georgia has solid experience with international and domestic NGOs, and this experience must be converted into strategic relations with the civil sector. In a word, Georgia can, and must, develop effective informational policies, and Georgian policy makers must understand that a “soft power” development is the only rational prospect for Georgia’s future.

¹⁵⁸ “Georgia,” *Human Rights Watch*, <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/01/13/georgi9903.htm>, (accessed: April 29, 2005)

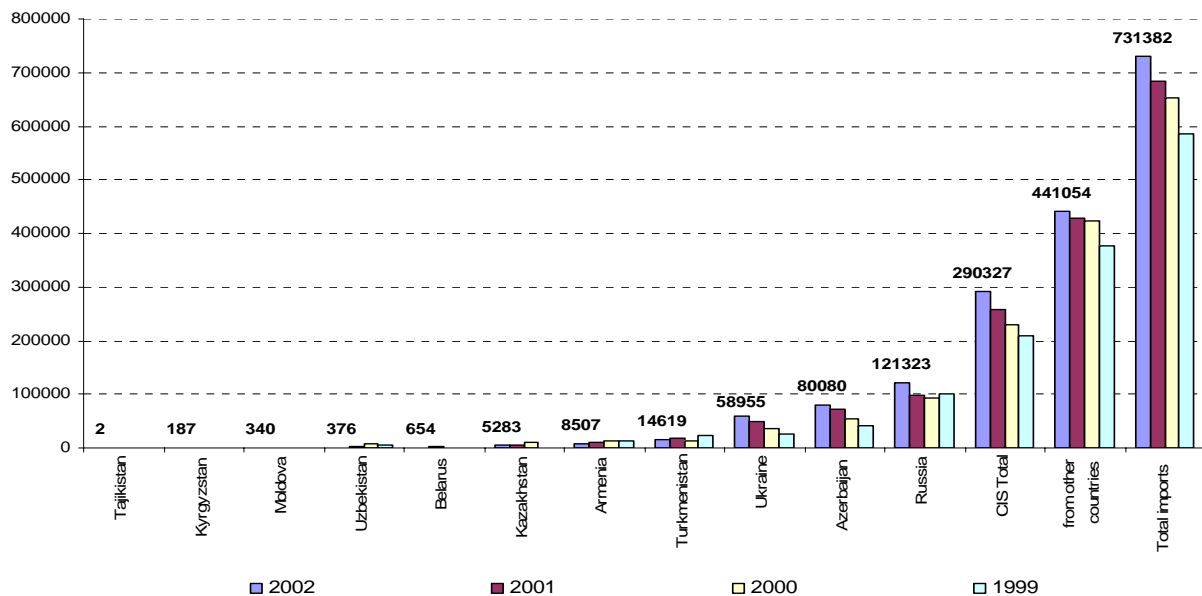
¹⁵⁹ “Freedom in the World 2005,” *Freedom House*, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/freeworld/2005/table2005.pdf>, (accessed: April 9, 2005)

4. Georgia's Economic Capabilities

As noted several times above, the Georgian economy began to considerably improve immediately after the Rose Revolution in 2003. The wide anti-corruption campaign of the new administration and new economic policies that largely include the radical privatization process of all state-owned industries came to be the primary determinants of such success. As a consequence, trust toward Georgia as a stable economic partner increased internationally and firms began to show interest of investing in the country.

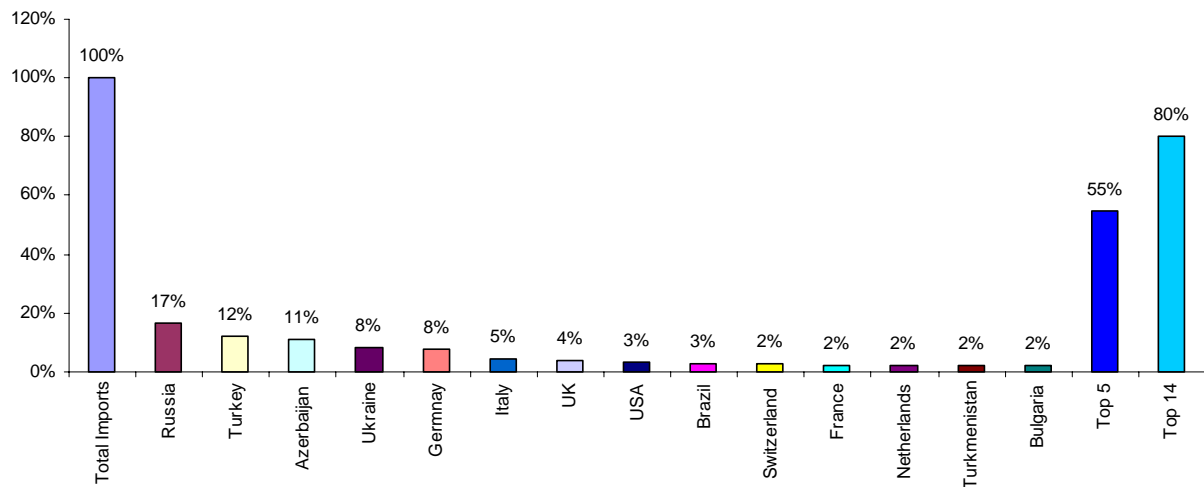
It is natural that Russia, as a giant neighbor, constitutes the main market for Georgia. By 2002 for example, imports from Russia comprised nearly 42% of imports from all CIS countries, and 17% of total Georgian imports (Figure 8).¹⁶⁰ As seen on the chart, growth of imports from other countries is slightly steeper during these four years, which means that Georgia was not trying (or failed) to diversify its trade. As is seen on another Figure (9), in 2002 five countries provided 55% of all supplies of Georgia, and fourteen countries provided 80% of supplies, which also speaks about the lack of diverse supplies to the country.

Figure 8. Georgia's Import Dynamics from the CIS, 1999-2002



¹⁶⁰ Data taken from: State Department of Statistics of Georgia, Official Website, <http://www.statistics.ge>, (accessed: April 3, 2005)

Figure 9. Top 14 Importer Countries in Georgia, 2002¹⁶¹



The situation with exports (Figure 10) shows the similar picture with the slight difference that while total exports in 2002 have increased, the trade ratio with Russia and Turkey has decreased, and it has risen with U.K., Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan and Switzerland. This change is associated with opening of the Supsa oil terminal in that year, through which early Caspian oil began to be shipped to Europe.

However, the next chart (Figure 11) clearly shows that Georgian exports are traveling to a limited number of countries, the top 5 of which consume 62% of Georgian exports, and only 11 of them consume 86% of Georgian exports.

¹⁶¹ Data taken from: State Department of Statistics of Georgia, Official Website, <http://www.statistics.ge>, (accessed: April 3, 2005)

Figure 10. Georgian Exports to top 11 Countries, \$ (1996-2002)

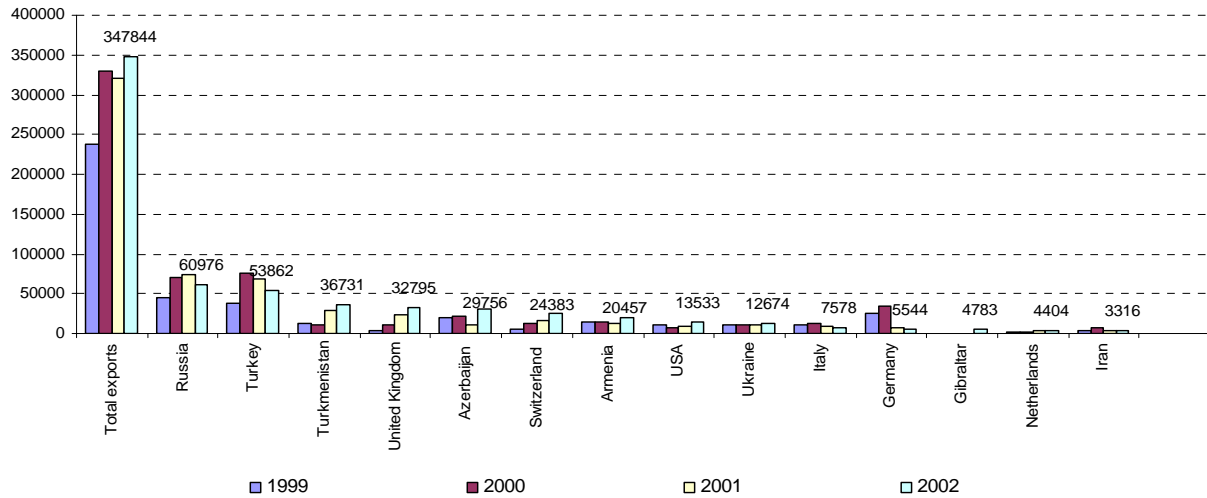
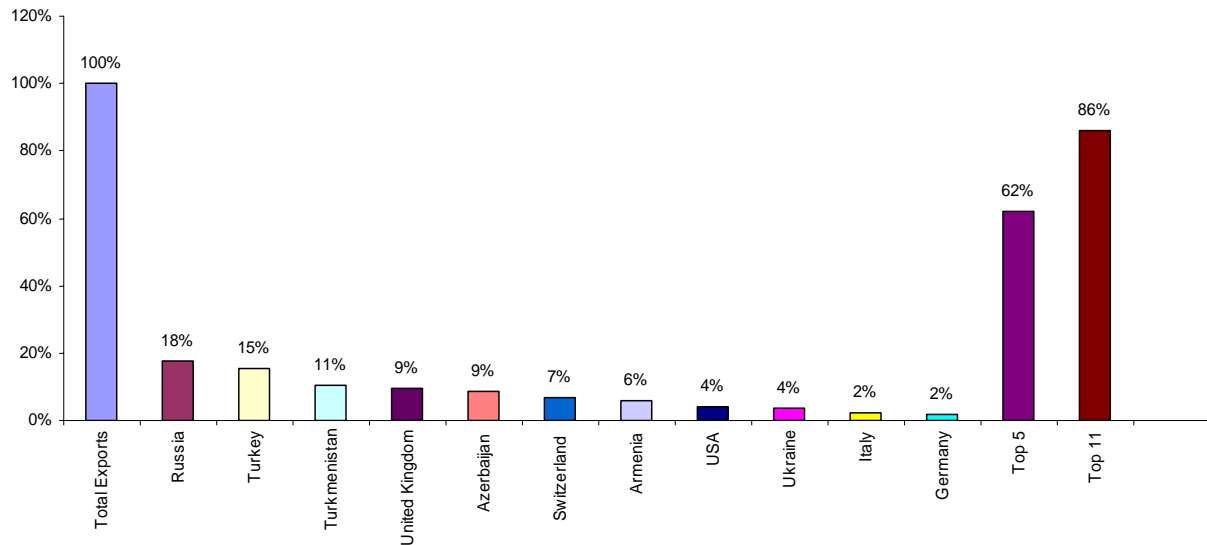


Figure 11. Georgian Exports to Top 11 Countries, by % (1996-2002)

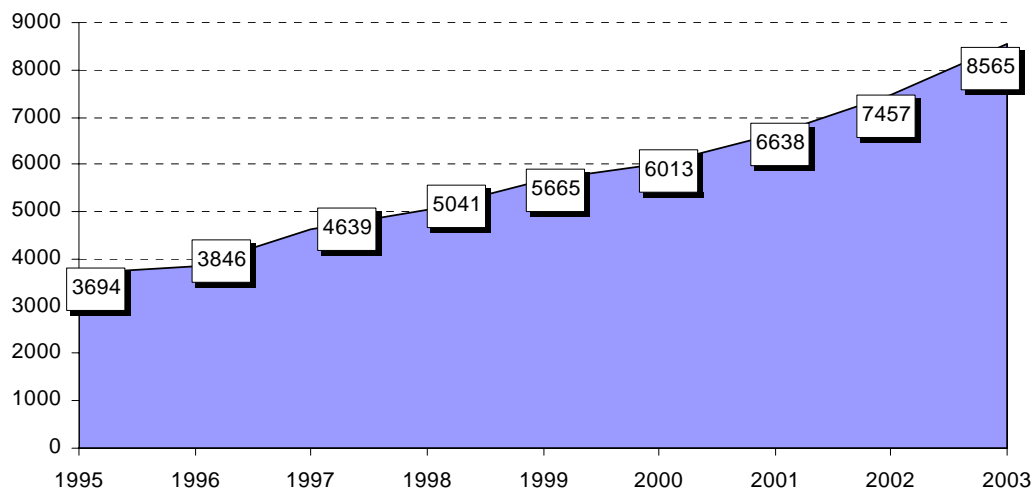


However, overall growth of the Georgian economy is also important. Figure 12 shows the growth of Georgian GDP between 1995 and 2003¹⁶². During this period, an average annual growth rate remained at approximately 5.5% annually, but because there

¹⁶² According to the CIA estimate, measured in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), Georgian GDP of 2003 equaled to \$12.18 billion: CIA - The World Factbook: *Georgia, Economy* <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/gg.html> (accessed: April 2, 2005)

were huge problems of shadow economy, this growth was hardly reflected in the State's budget. After 2003, the situation has radically changed. Annual growth of GDP reached 8.6%¹⁶³, and the State budget almost tripled mainly due to the reducing shadow sector. This situation has been positively reflecting on the development of military capabilities, border controls, police, etc. The military budget of Georgia, as mentioned previously, has increased by almost five times during the last two years.

Figure 12. Gross Domestic Product, million Georgian Lari



There is a noticeable trend in Georgia to invest in infrastructure development, including primarily roads, airports, tourism sector, etc. It seems that the administration is preparing the country for even larger investments. Social problems are also remembered and the first time after independence, the new administration began to pay salaries (which increased 5-10 times in public sector) and pensions (which doubled) without delay.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Mikhail Saakashvili, Zurab Zhvania, "Georgia: Memorandum of Economic and Financial Policies for 2004" in: *International Monetary Fund (IMF)*
<http://www.imf.org/External/NP/LOI/2004/geo/01/index.htm> (accessed: March 3, 2005)

¹⁶⁴ Q&A with Minister of Economic Development: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*,
<http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=9364> (accessed: November 24, 2004)

Draft 2005 Budget Prioritizes Defense, Social Security: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*,
<http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=7962> (accessed: October 2, 2004)

However, over 50% of population continues to live at extreme poverty levels¹⁶⁵. In this situation, growing prices continue to cause dissatisfaction of the population, and various political groups exploit these hardships for their own purposes. As a result, the popularity of the government dropped from 96% to 34.7% in just a little more than one year,¹⁶⁶ although it must be mentioned that the next closest party enjoys support of just 7.2% of the population. In a word, dealing with popular dissatisfaction and, at the same time, carrying out dramatic economic reforms will yet remain the priority task of Georgia's new government. This issue is particularly important for security considerations because separatist leaders, along with Moscow, are following the developments in Georgia very carefully and are trying their best to sketch the "failure story" of Tbilisi and the Rose Revolution.

As it was mentioned above, energy problems in Georgia remain particularly severe. Not only Moscow's policies, but problems related to outdated infrastructure also affect the situation. However, the new administration has prepared plans to improve energy generation and transportation and reduction of energy losses. An energy sector action plan was developed, and authorities hope to achieve significant improvement by the end of 2006.¹⁶⁷ Overall, Georgia needs investments of about 700-800 million USD to ensure that the country becomes reasonably self-sufficient in terms of energy. These investments would include rehabilitation of the existing infrastructure and building of the new Khudon HES (Hydro Electric Station).¹⁶⁸ The main phase of construction will take 5-6 years. However, before dramatic reformation of the sector begins, the government anticipates 2 years of preparatory work in order to make the sector more attractive for investors, and thus, it will take more than 5-6 years.

The Georgian energy infrastructure is significant for strategic purposes also. Due to its strategic location, Georgia has the advantage of becoming a choice for gas transit between the North-South and East-West lines. However, this benefit will disappear if the

¹⁶⁵ Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Program, in: *International Monetary Fund*, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2005/cr05113.pdf> (accessed: March 30, 2005)

¹⁶⁶ GORBI, *Public Opinion Survey 2005 March*, http://www.gorbi.com/store/en/20050401_150004.PDF

¹⁶⁷ International Monetary Fund, *Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Program*, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2005/cr05113.pdf> (accessed: March 30, 2005)

¹⁶⁸ Ibid

internal system collapses. This may happen in a few years if immediate investments of at least \$40 million are not made. East-West transit line will transport gas from Shah-Deniz in trans-Caspian to Turkey and then European markets. As a transit country, Georgia has an opportunity to participate in negotiations on purchase and sale.¹⁶⁹ This advantage must not be lost.

In terms of self-sufficiency, Georgia will have to play a game to ensure that it will no longer face energy shortages. Georgia has no facilities to store gas, so the gas supply will have to be totally balanced by suppliers. As said, this situation requires great care from the administration, and diversified supplies seem to be a reasonable solution to Georgia's problems. While this is a difficult problem, Tbilisi now works with Iran and Armenia to ensure that energy supplies, both gas and electricity, are diversified. Besides, the BTC (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan) and the SCP (The South Caucasus Gas Pipeline) projects will be completed in May/June 2005 and 2006 respectively.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ International Monetary Fund, *Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Program*, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2005/cr05113.pdf> (accessed: March 30, 2005)

¹⁷⁰ Caspian Development and Export, Official Website: <http://www.caspiandevlopmentandexport.com/ASP/Home.asp#>, (accessed: March 17, 2005)

IV. MAIN PRINCIPLES OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY AND FUTURE TASKS OF GEORGIA

A. GEORGIA'S SECURITY DILEMMA

As quoted in the introductory part of this thesis, Mearsheimer¹⁷¹ says, “The essence of the security dilemma is that the measures a state takes to increase its own security usually decrease the security of other states”. Russia is a double edged sword for Georgia. On the one hand, a strong Russia will again pursue imperialist ambitions and this would in turn be problematic for Georgia. On the other hand, a decrease of Russia's security can itself be a problem because the rapid collapse of Moscow's power could trigger new conflicts, and these conflicts can easily spill out to Georgian territory, as had already been the case during the second Chechen War. Besides, Russia possesses huge amounts of weaponry, small and heavy arms, nuclear and chemical weapons, which may easily appear in separatists' hands if Moscow loses control over its possessions. For these and several other reasons, rapid decline of Moscow's powers seems an unlikely, and also unwanted, outcome for Tbilisi, and probably for anyone in the world. Instead, Tbilisi needs Moscow's concessions and a *structural transformation* of relations, rather than permanent confrontation with an open front in the heart of Georgia.

But this is only one side of the dilemma. In theory, an increase of Georgia's powers can raise reservations in Moscow, too. It is obvious, however, that whatever the strength of Georgia, it can hardly pose a threat to Russia. The best Georgia can do is to restrict Moscow's influence in the Caucasus and the Caspian, that is, at least restrict Moscow's economic monopoly. Thus, in order to legitimize its anti-Georgian policies, Moscow will need to persuade the Russian population of at least two things: that Tbilisi's stance is just a continuation of the U.S. policies; and that Georgia facilitates terror in Russia. In effect, this is what the Kremlin tries to do.

In other words, it is absolutely necessary for Moscow to launch appropriate informational campaigns against Georgia. Without informational campaigns, the Kremlin will fail to persuade the Russian population that Georgia is an enemy of Russia. However, the informational domain is exactly where the Kremlin may not be able to

¹⁷¹ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York, London: University of Chicago, W.W. Norton, 2001), 36

achieve a decisive advantage over Georgia, and Tbilisi must use this opportunity. It is also safer for Georgia to confront Russia in this sphere, and in principle Tbilisi well understands this.

Thus, Tbilisi can feel relatively safe while increasing its powers if it develops and executes proper and successful informational campaigns. As a result, Tbilisi can not only restructure relations with Russia over time, but also facilitate changes in Moscow's general politics. Below, this thesis elaborates on this issue in detail. One final issue to mention is that the closest possible cooperation with the West and the United States in particular, remains essential for Tbilisi. This cooperation must ensure that Moscow will not overreact to Tbilisi's campaigns.

B. FEASIBLE STRATEGIES FOR GEORGIA

To reiterate, the security goals of Georgia were defined in this thesis as independence from Russia and exercising sovereignty over its entire territory. This thesis further discusses the strategies that would facilitate neutralizing Russian destructive interference and, by that, help Tbilisi resolve its internal problems in a peaceful and gradual manner.

To briefly summarize what was said previously, Russian diplomatic standing was defined as a function of their overall power, which targets sub-state elements, states, and international organizations. All in all, it can be said that Russia pursues the balancing policies against the United States, and treats Georgia as a U.S. representative in the region. While such perception arrests Russia's forceful strategies, it still doesn't deter them from pursuing destructive policies against Georgia. Then again, presenting Georgia as an imminent threat to Russia legitimizes Moscow's unfriendly behavior in the eyes of the Russian population and grants the Kremlin a legitimacy for keeping their methods unchanged.

In relations with different international organizations, Russia exploits its position and tries to arrest decisions contradictory to their interests. In relation to non-states, meaning separatist regimes and ethnic groups, Russian military presence and informational campaigns play the decisive role. Russia flirts with the rhetoric of balance

against the unipolar world, netting the wide web of interests that tries to deter the alleged coercion of the United States.

Accordingly, it should be plausible to define Moscow's stance with Georgia, and maybe the Caucasus at large, by the following three major concepts: 1) Deterring the defender internationally (the United States and the West); 2) Directly coercing the protégée regionally (Georgia); and 3) Coercing by indirect means (leveraging sub-states, economic means, etc.). Subsequently, Tbilisi's diplomacy should be defined as: 1) Creating supportive background for the defender; 2) Developing the capabilities of self-defense; and 3) Gradual eliminating the foundations of separatism. Georgia must challenge Russia on all four battlefields, that is, in informational, diplomatic, economic, and military domains. Different approaches to each of these, however, will be needed.

Below, feasible military, economic, diplomatic and informational strategies of Georgia are discussed.

1. Feasible Strategies of Military Buildup

It is conceivable that Georgia will never confront Russia on Russian soil. Rather, Tbilisi must prepare to deal with the threats that Moscow poses to Georgia. In military terms, this may include military confrontation with separatist regimes and, in the case of Tbilisi's success, complication of internal security of Georgia by means of state-sponsored terrorism or organized insurgency. Emphasis on conventional capabilities, which is popular today in Tbilisi, may not appear particularly helpful for such challenges. Instead, Georgia has to also focus on unconventional warfare and ensure that increased defense budgets are not wasted in vain.

Conventional capabilities, however, will retain their value, provided that South Ossetian and Abkhazian forces are trained by Russia, and they have forces focused on conventional defense. Latest reports reveal that Russians have stationed six SU-27 jet fighters in Abkhazia,¹⁷² on the military base that Moscow claims to have it closed in

¹⁷² Inter Press News Agency, "Moscow Beefs Up Its Military Presence in Abkhazia," in: *Conflicts*, http://www.interpress.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=10150&date=2005-04-25&new_month=04&new_year=2005 (accessed: April 25, 2005)

2001. In other words, forces that Tbilisi may face in the future, at least on a limited level, will consist of troops trained according to conventional doctrines and Georgia must be able to defeat them if needed.

However, taking into consideration that if the conflict escalates, Georgians will face not only Abkhazian and South Ossetian troops, but also Russian soldiers (supposedly mainly airborne contingents) and various guerrillas and mercenaries from southern Russia, it becomes more obvious that Tbilisi must prefer mobility and precision to heavy and inflexible weaponry and army structures. This strategic dimension, thus, must be added to any Georgian military buildup. From a distance, it seems that this dimension is absent from the plans of current defense officials.

Georgia doesn't need to pay much attention to conventional offensive capabilities at this stage. The problem it faces constitutes the internal problem of the country and conventional forces cannot be easily used. Rather, as noted above, strategies of policing, not conquering, the territory must be detailed by Tbilisi. While general plans and policies of Tbilisi are not intending conventional aggression, the military sector doesn't seem to follow political objectives of the administration, and this issue must be addressed first and foremost. It is also clear that Georgian troops must receive appropriate training for carrying out their duties in urban and other highly populated areas.

In addition, effective air defense capabilities will still be essential for Georgia. Given that Russians will undertake overt military hostilities against Georgia, and that they will almost certainly prefer covert military aid to separatists, this means that aerial attacks will also be limited in scope. Georgia should be able to effectively defend itself from such a limited offensive, but it needs to accordingly prepare for the anticipated threats.

For political and future military-strategic purposes, wide international cooperation will also remain essential. Georgia must ensure that interoperability with NATO is achieved as soon as possible, and that the country gets ready for NATO accession in the nearest future. This dimension of military buildup will also be essential for political and diplomatic strengthening of the State.

Also, Georgia must be able to fulfill its international commitments. As noted, Georgia has sent 850 troops to Iraq, and continues to support U.S. policies in the area.

Also, there is one Georgian battalion deployed in Kosovo and Tbilisi's political preferences provided, it would be plausible to assume that Georgia will desire to increase its peacekeeping contributions even further. This dimension must also be further enhanced in military preparations of the troops.

2. Feasible Strategies for Economic Security

As it was noted many times in this thesis, the main security problem of the Georgian economy is its over-attachment to Russian supplies and markets. Also, taking into account the nature of Moscow's politics toward their private companies, it may be reasonable for Tbilisi to avoid over-investment by Russian-based firms until the political situation is resolved.

Rule of law and political stability are essential conditions that the administration must provide for the fast economic buildup of the country. Even from a purely economic viewpoint, Tbilisi must ensure that investors feel safe in doing business in Georgia. Special investment-supporting policies must also be introduced, and it must be assured that the process of investments follows some logic of economic development. The State must take a very careful regulatory role here, not by restricting free market conditions, but as consulter and aid to domestic business to develop prospective directions of entrepreneurship. Taking into consideration the experience of so-called "developmental states" would be very beneficial for Georgia over time.

3. Feasible Strategies for Georgian Diplomacy

In sum, it can be stated that Georgian diplomacy must be aimed at removing Russian military presence in the region; reducing Russian willingness to confront Georgian interests; and developing international and domestic conduct that would further bind Georgia as a strategic partner of the United States. In this respect, however, Georgia should not restrict its policy to just bandwagoning with the United States. Such policy would be less likely to be successful over the long run. It may resolve some present-day problems of Georgia but it is unlikely to eliminate all the security concerns of the country in the future.

As was mentioned above, Moscow perceives Georgia as some sort of US representative in the region, and the Kremlin uses this propaganda to legitimize its unfriendly behavior. It is very easy to publicly prove these allegations for the Kremlin because Georgia is generally not perceived as a significant player in Russia, and Russians do not believe that Georgia could contend with the Russian pressure if it had no backing from Washington. Subsequently, Tbilisi needs to create capabilities that would diminish the bases for such allegations and introduce Georgia as an independent regional player. This will not happen until Tbilisi declares its goals in a loud and explicit way.

The main objectives for Georgia must be defined as independence, sovereignty, democracy, prosperity, economic development and stability of the region. Hence, Tbilisi must cooperate with whoever shows willingness for such cooperation. Emergence of some new empire at its borders should be unacceptable for Georgia.

Tbilisi must pursue policies of equal and diversified relations and cooperate with the United States to enhance its standing in the region. In exchange, Tbilisi must identify the interests of the United States in the region, and do its best to help address those interests. In a word, a strong partnership and cooperation with the United States must be the foundation of Georgia's future policies. Accordingly, in the beginning Georgia must prefer a mix of strategies of balancing and bandwagoning, and ensure that these relations transform into pure balancing over time. In other words, Tbilisi must choose to bandwagon with the United States on the first stage and must direct its policies to creating feasible regional balances to Russia over time. This is the only way that Tbilisi would escape accusations for being an imminently anti-Russian player in the region, and the only way towards diversified and transparent development of the region at large.

The policies of Tbilisi, as noted above, must in no way be based on straightforward conventional thinking. Instead, Tbilisi must develop multi-dimensional and multi-aimed strategies, and observe the security environment as some highly decentralized system, with opportunities to establish separate contacts with distinct partners. In general, until problems with Russia are resolved, Georgia must favor the strategy of limited escalation coupled with deterrence of counter-escalation. Importantly, Tbilisi must consider "horizontal escalation" as its preference and avoid the possibility of "vertical escalation."

Alexander George describes “horizontal escalation” as when the “defender takes actions to damage the challenger in other areas or threatens to do so.”¹⁷³ In the situation that has been discussed here, however, this strategy cannot be so explicit. Rather, Georgia must develop such structural relations that would trigger unacceptable escalation to Russia if they threaten Tbilisi. Georgia must try to sow the web of multi-level relations with “issue-specific centers” in Tbilisi. Parts of this “web” must have interest in independent and stable Georgia. In other words, Tbilisi must establish additional military, economic, and even informational defenses against Russia.

In the United States–Georgia–Russia relationship, Georgia is the only side whose legitimate rights are damaged and who can pose legitimate demands on Russia. A strong Georgia would nicely match U.S. interests in the Caspian and the Caucasus. Hence, as the United States helps Georgia address its interests, and as Tbilisi realizes that the U.S. backing is absolutely necessary in this process, the United States acquires legitimate influence in Georgia. Accordingly, legitimate Georgian interests are the right tools for the United States, and the U.S. interest is the right chance for Georgia.

Georgia must not allow that tensions with Russia translate into military confrontation. Rather, Tbilisi must employ diplomacy and its informational powers and, in order to avoid the possibility of military confrontation with Russia, create the right tools for regional balance. Proper regional alliances, including so called “deep alliances”, that is, close relations with NGOs and several other organizations and individuals in Russia, not against Russia but *against particular policies* of Moscow, will become key tools.

It should also be said that an extended deterrence model of crisis management seems the only solution of Georgian-Russian disagreement. Of course, it must not necessarily transition to military confrontation or threats of such confrontation between the United States and Russia, but Georgia clearly needs backing to avoid overreaction from Russian. Until recently, it would be very difficult to imagine, but now Georgia can reasonably hope for U.S. support if seriously threatened by Moscow. According to

¹⁷³ Alexander George, *Avoiding War: Problems of Crisis Management*. (Boulder, CO: West view Press, 1991), 388

Huth,¹⁷⁴ the probability of deterrence success increases if protégée has a military alliance with the defender. To some limited degree, Georgian participation in the anti-terrorist coalition with the United States can be counted such an alliance.

However, it is also unlikely that the United States would consider direct military confrontation with Russia, which would be a disaster for Georgia. Huth also mentions that, “the probability of deterrence success decreases if the potential attacker is contiguous with the protégé.”¹⁷⁵ Accordingly, it gets more likely that accommodation will take place in the U.S.-Russian relations, and Georgia must adjust to such solutions.

Georgia will have to hope for U.S. assistance in the business of “horizontal escalation”, meaning a variety of diplomatic measures and economic and other kinds of pressures on Russia to arrest their new aggression in the Caucasus and Georgia in particular. The United States, on the other hand, at least it seems from the viewpoint of this thesis, must favor policies of supporting strong regional coalitions rather than going into direct conflict with Russia.

Accordingly, Georgia needs to look at effective alliances and try to create the kind of regional cooperation with other states that would further deter Russia’s negative involvement in the future. One such alliance, as was mentioned in the third chapter of this thesis, is GUUAM. It was also mentioned that the military dimension is excluded from this organization. Thus, it is still unclear how Georgia can achieve Russian concessions. What kind of threats can Georgia (or GUUAM) pose to Russia? Is it possible for Russia to seriously negotiate with Georgia? Can or should GUUAM threaten Russia?

¹⁷⁴ Huth, P. *Extended Deterrence and the Prevention of War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 44

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 47

Figure 13. Existing and Proposed Russian Pipelines¹⁷⁶



Seen in Figure 13, Russia exports its energy resources almost exclusively through GUUAM member states. It would be the topic of future research to detail Russian energy politics, but it is clear without even going into depth: strong and well defended GUUAM and diversification of energy supplies of participant States would check Russia's appetite on the energy bazaar. Accordingly, Georgian diplomacy must serve as strong regional cooperation, strengthening GUUAM as a counterweight to Russia, and creating effective defenses by closely cooperating with the United States and NATO. Threatening to cut off Russia's access to international oil markets is an important card that GUUAM could use as leverage on Russia.

As for separatist regimes, it must be noted first of all that forceful resolution of these problems would be not only unreasonable but also unlikely and contradictory to other commitments of Tbilisi. Georgia's anticipated accession to NATO and its current relations with the EU and the CE almost rule out any such possibility. Before accession, Tbilisi will have to demonstrate that its improved military capabilities are not used as

¹⁷⁶ Energy Information Administration (EIA), "Russian Major Oil and Natural Gas Pipeline Projects," http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/russia_pipelines.pdf (accessed: April 17, 2005)

oppressive means against minorities. Besides, Tbilisi's talks with the EU and the EC permanently result in open declarations that Tbilisi favors peaceful policies, and will not use force to resolve its territorial problems. Even after accession, whenever it happens, Georgia will still have to refrain from the use of force because one of the main principles of NATO enlargement forbids new members' usage of force to settle "ethnic disputes or external territorial disputes, or internal jurisdictional disputes" and advocates peaceful means in accordance with the OSCE principles¹⁷⁷. The only possibility that the "peace enforcement" efforts change traditional peacekeeping in these regions is that separatists refrain from negotiations. Thus, Tbilisi needs to address appropriate informational campaigns instead, leverage peaceful negotiations, and choose a prospective narrative that would spread far from Georgian borders.

To feel secure in this process, GUUAM can be the right tool, but it is still needed to clearly formulate mechanisms of cooperation between the member states. Furthermore, GUUAM can transform into some different organization and become a symbol of the new geopolitical reality of the region. It must become the organization capable to create stalemate situations for Russia, the point from where sides will start to converge toward resolutions. The main determinant of such capabilities of GUUAM must not necessarily be its offensive capabilities but rather its defensive ones. For example, apart from developing capabilities necessary to deal with separatists, the creation of a common air-defense system would be a matter of immeasurable importance with this respect. In a word, GUUAM must start to provide sensible security to its members and in this respect, as already noted above, cooperation with NATO and the United States will be essential. Even if some member states of GUUAM will join NATO over time, GUUAM will still need to stay in play, as the "first check" of Russian-born problems. Geography and composition of the organization will precisely match this goal.

In this respect, further expansion of GUUAM will be an issue of great importance, and it will also have to change its name to better reflect the philosophy of the organization. All the post-Soviet and post-Communist states except Russia, who will share the narrative of the GUUAM members, may join the organization over time. To

¹⁷⁷ NATO, "Study on NATO Enlargement", in: *Basic Texts*, <http://www.nato.int/docu/basictxt/enl-9501.htm> (accessed: April 22, 2005)

avoid overreaction from Russia, GUUAM must avoid anti-Russian rhetoric and develop issue-specific powers, as was recommended for Georgia.

GUUAM must become an organization that would oversee and enforce the realization of certain principles within its member states, and negotiate in defense of those principles. Thus, GUUAM must transform into a union of states that favor genuine transformation and pursue an agenda of cooperation to achieve declared goals. GUUAM members must cooperate in the area of foreign policies as well, and coordinate their talks with Moscow. Black Sea and Caspian Sea politics must become the core interest of the organization.

To conclude, despite the obvious disadvantage of Georgia with regards of its structural power, Georgia may soon have considerable issue-specific powers in negotiations with Russia. Georgia must free itself of dependence from Russia, develop connections and build alliances, and employ its informational strategy as a means for this. The informational domain and “soft power”, coupled with defense and deterrence provided within the frames of regional and global alliances, can certainly be the most significant tools in Georgia’s hands.

4. Feasible Informational Strategies for Georgia

To achieve concessions from Russia, Georgia must develop new political resources, and do this in a way that will not cause overreaction of Moscow. Georgia must avoid martial and teasing rhetoric that often takes place in Tbilisi, and ensure that its military forces are used exclusively for defensive and peacekeeping purposes, exclusively in the areas where Russia has no direct security interests. Informational strategies, diplomacy and economic development must become the priority for Georgian policy and decision-makers, and alliances must be created predominantly in these directions.

Tbilisi must ensure that Russia doesn’t get a “just cause” for the anti-Georgian belligerence, and whenever possible, try to change Moscow’s perception of Georgia as a problem to Russian security and for this Tbilisi must increasingly target public opinion in Russia. But to address foreign populations, Tbilisi must have a “just cause” and justified demands. The violation of territorial integrity of Georgia can well serve as the “just cause” for dissatisfaction, and call for peace and stability is a right reason to address

others. A justified demand can be a respect of sovereignty and adherence to international commitments for Russia. Likewise, Tbilisi must address all three main components of a “liberal triangle” which are: democracy and economic interdependence through international institutions¹⁷⁸.

Namely, together with fostering ties with Western partners and international organizations such as NATO and the EU, and together with GUUAM, Tbilisi must look at opportunities in the CIS. Georgia was forced to join the organization in 1993. Now this can be viewed as an opportunity. All former Soviet republics apart from the three Baltic States are members of the CIS today. Along with Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan¹⁷⁹, and possibly soon Kyrgyzstan, Tbilisi can create a strong nucleus in the organization. Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan now also develop relatively independent policies from Russia, and their cooperation can be achievable for several issues, primarily concerning energy transfers. Six members, however, would represent half of the organization and a strong vote. Tbilisi and its partners can create very significant levers in the CIS to address issues of fair economic cooperation, support to democratic development, and create *mechanisms* to address that cooperation. For a productive cooperation within the CIS, it will be necessary to address a progressive information narrative, and unify allies around the idea of fair trade, democracy and protecting human rights.

Also, using the example of Adjara¹⁸⁰ where Tbilisi has already resolved the problem of separatism, Tbilisi must create the success story for others. If Tbilisi develops attractive model of an autonomous republic in Adjara, it can hence easier address populations in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Such an approach can be very interesting especially because Georgia does not risk future stability in Adjara which is populated with ethnic Georgians.

¹⁷⁸ Russet, B. O’Neal, J. Triangulating Peace: Democracy, Interdependence, and International Organizations. New (York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001)

¹⁷⁹ Uzbekistan is still unenthusiastic regarding GUUAM but it neither discloses final “no” to the alliance. However, Uzbekistan was not present at GUUAM foreign ministers’ meeting in New York, in September 2004. See: GUUAM Foreign Ministers Meet in New York: Civil Georgia Online Magazine, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=7915> (Accessed: September 25, 2004)

¹⁸⁰ Adjara is another autonomous region in Georgia. Pro-Russian separatist warlord Alsan Abashidze, who was the head of Adjarian Supreme Soviet, was ousted by people’s peaceful uprising on May 6, 2004, soon after the Rose Revolution in Tbilisi. See: Saakashvili: Abashidze Fled: Civil Georgia Online Magazine, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=6879> (accessed: May 6, 2004)

Besides, the example of Autonomous Republic of Adjara can be used as the counter-balance to the narrative of separatist regions. For example, separatist regions of Georgia and Transdnistrian separatists of Moldova,¹⁸¹ now try to create some kind of “alliances” and claim for cooperation and “joint defense” policies. The so-called “Confederation of North Caucasus Peoples” has also been mentioned in this thesis several times. In response to this, the Autonomous Republic of Adjara can also initiate new cooperation of federative units of the region, namely in the North Caucasus, and help address standards of power decentralization between the center and regions.

As was mentioned in the third chapter of this thesis, for successful informational campaigns abroad, Tbilisi will need to create a success-story at home. Fast economic development will make Georgia attractive example for others. Informational campaigns must reflect deeds and not simply be words. Promoting Georgian culture and attracting students to Georgian educational institutions from all over the region will be a very helpful means for future regional peace and security of Georgia.

Finally, it must be mentioned one more time that if Georgia wants to create international understanding and support, and if Georgia wants its position be heard in international forums, then Tbilisi must achieve democratic reforms and ensure that it becomes an example for others in the region.

C. FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Today Georgia is proceeding well on its way towards democratic development. Several problems still remain with hopes of being addressed soon. What is still problematic is that the grand picture of the government’s philosophy is not supported organizationally, and Tbilisi still faces inability to integrate separate “democratic bits” that are randomly scattered throughout the region. Accumulation of these “bits” under a well structured informational and organizational process would greatly add to the relative power of Georgia and of those in the region who are willing to address genuine democratic reforms and seek stability for their countries.

After the “Rose Revolution”, Georgia has emerged as an example of peaceful democratic reformation of the post-Soviet government. However, grand problems of the

¹⁸¹ Bagapsh: Secessionist Regions Coordinate Policy: Civil Georgia Online Magazine, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=8911> (accessed: January 28, 2005)

state that existed before, that is, economic dependence and lack of sovereignty, territorial disintegration and social fragmentation, persist. The main narrative of Georgia's new administration is peaceful and democratic transformation of the country and all persistent problems must be treated accordingly. Georgia will be successful if the underlying principles of the Rose Revolution are followed consistently and with close cooperation with the international community. Specifically, in four main domains of state power respectively, these are the steps and the main principles that the Georgian administration will have to address in the nearest future:

In Informational Domain

Main principle: attractiveness and clarity

- Provide well structured and supported philosophy of changes, and communicate it to domestic and foreign societies, including primarily the Russian population
- Support universal values and principles, uphold peace and democracy
- Advocate morale in the society and politics
- Advocate minority rights, and create the “show-case” on the example of Adjara
- Treat preserving minority rights as a question of National Interest
- Treat regional stability as a question of strong National Interest
- Uphold integration policies, internationally and regionally as well
- Utilize international organizations as a forum for global debates
- Support cultural and educational projects, attract youth from all over the region
- Support media and communication systems' development in the separatist regions and in the country as a whole, subsidize respective programs

In Diplomacy

Main principle: be right to have a might

- Utilize diplomacy to generate flexibility of policies and multiple issue-specific powers

- Diversify diplomatic links internationally
- Enter existing, and create new alliances to balance Russian political influence
- Utilize opportunities of cooperation within the CIS
- Prefer a wide strategic partnership with the United States
- Pursue integration policies with the EU
- Treat moral principles as a question of National Interest

In Economy

Main principle: self-sustainment and diversity

- Avoid dependence on Russia
- Diversify supplies and markets
- Increase own production capabilities
- Support and protect domestic and foreign investments
- Maintain law and openness

In Defense

Main principle: Self-defense and international cooperation

- Create effective defense capabilities, pay particular attention to air-defense and proper war-fighting strategies, including unconventional capabilities
- Prefer quality to quantity
- Achieve and maintain NATO standards, create proper mechanisms of civil-military cooperation
- Integrate NATO
- Widely participate in international peacekeeping efforts

These general directions, if followed steadily and consistently, by the viewpoint of this thesis, would help Georgia overcome its problems and properly shape the future security environment of the region.

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APPENDIX

The thesis draft was already completed when some significant events relevant to the recommendations and observations of this thesis occurred. In sequence, these are: the withdrawal of Uzbekistan from GUUAM; declarations during U.S. President Bush's visit in Georgia; presentation of the draft of the Georgian National Security Concept in the Parliament; Georgian President M. Saakashvili's speech in Warsaw, Poland, at the Council of Europe meeting; the declaration by Ukrainian Foreign Minister Boris Tarasyuk that the name of the GUUAM alliance may change, and that the working version of this name is "Commonwealth of Democracy and Development"; and the agreement about Russian military bases' withdrawal from Georgia by 2008, signed by the Foreign Ministers of Russian Federation and Georgia.

In late April, Uzbek President Karimov sent an official letter of refusal to Moldovan President Voronin, current chair of GUUAM, stating that GUUAM has transformed into a political organization while it was supposed to mainly deal with problems of economic cooperation. Such transformation, Karimov claimed, is unacceptable to Uzbekistan. It must be noted here that Karimov's retreat is not surprising or something unexpected and Karimov's declining enthusiasm toward GUUAM was noted in this thesis. During the last two years, he used to decline any active role in GUUAM and was just holding himself off to officially withdraw from the alliance. The last GUUAM summit¹⁸², although Uzbekistan was presented with an empty chair at the table, gave way to Russian worries about the claims of the alliance for further enlargement. It is conceivable that the Kremlin could have requested of Karimov that he make his stance clear, and Karimov made his choice. In this light, provided that Uzbekistan's participation in the alliance was rather formal, their official withdrawal formalized their absence, which looks to serve Russian informational strategies and appears counterweight to GUUAM claims for enlargement. In fact, with Uzbekistan's withdrawal GUUAM became GUAM, with one "U" dropped from its name.

¹⁸² Gulnoza Saidazimova, "GUUAM Summit in Chisinau Focuses on Separatism, Regional Cooperation," in: *Eurasia Insight*, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/pp042405.shtml> (accessed: May 16, 2005)

This notwithstanding, Uzbekistan's leaving doesn't change the large picture and the prospects of the alliance. Even Uzbekistan can be hopeful for a return after 2007, when Presidential elections are planned in this country. Karimov's second Presidential term would end in 2005 because he was elected in 2000, but by leveraging the referendum in 2002 and amending Uzbekistan's constitution to allow for seven-year Presidential terms, Karimov extended his Presidency until 2007, when the next elections will take place¹⁸³.

Karimov is known for his authoritarianism and antagonism to western values. For example, in January 2000, after the OSCE had criticized the 1999 parliamentary elections, Karimov stated: "The OSCE focuses only on establishment of democracy, the protection of human rights and the freedom of the press. I am now questioning these values."¹⁸⁴ In 2005, a human rights overview of the Human Rights Watch, Uzbekistan's human rights record, is termed "disastrous"¹⁸⁵. All kinds of human rights violations are reported from year to year in Uzbekistan, and the last events of slamming demonstrations in Andijan¹⁸⁶, with nearly 1000 civilians left dead, may only accelerate changes in the country and mark the point of return for the country, especially given this wave of democratic revolutions all along the region.

The suggestions of this thesis that GUUAM would have to transform into an institution that would better reflect the philosophy and goals of the organization are been already addressing. The thesis suggested that GUUAM must acquire a new name, a permanent organizational structure, and a clearer philosophy. Boris Tarasyuk, Ukraine's Foreign Minister, has stated that GUUAM will soon have secretariat in Kiev, and that its name will change to "Commonwealth of Democracy and Development".¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ Profile of President Islam Karimov, in: *Human Rights News*, <http://www.hrw.org/press/2002/03/karimovprof.htm> (accessed: May 20, 2005)

¹⁸⁴ Ibid

¹⁸⁵ Human Rights Watch: "World Report 2005", <http://hrw.org/wr2k5> (accessed: May 20, 2005)

¹⁸⁶ Uzbekistan: Government Shuts Off Andijan, in: *Human Rights News*, <http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2005/05/26/uzbeki11019.htm>, (accessed: May 26, 2005)

¹⁸⁷ Title to Be Changed to GUUAM, in: *Rustavi2 TV*: <http://www.rustavi2.com/view.php?id=11040> (accessed: May 19, 2005)

On May 10, 2005 U.S. President Bush traveled to Tbilisi immediately after his visit to Moscow, where he took part in celebrations for the 60th anniversary of the defeat of fascism, which was held in the Red Square. In Tbilisi, President Bush called Georgia a “beacon of liberty” and expressed readiness to help Georgia overcome its difficulties with Russia and separatist regions. President Bush stressed also that Georgia is an example of a peaceful change of totalitarian regimes and that it inspires many people throughout the world to follow the path of democratization. He also declared that the United States favors peaceful resolution of all disputed questions that Georgia faces today. Another issue emphasized by President Bush was energy independence of Georgia, and after his meeting with the Chairwoman of Parliament of Georgia, Mrs. Burjanadze declared their “unanimous position regarding the privatization of Georgia’s gas pipeline system (selling it to a Russian company, A.B.) - we are against this privatization”¹⁸⁸.

During President Bush’s visit to Georgia, Dr. Condoleezza Rice, who accompanied the President, gave an interview to Georgian TV “IMEDI”. The interview was aired on May 15th, in the popular program “DROEBA”¹⁸⁹. In this interview, Dr. Rice stated that Georgia can become a “great multiethnic democracy” and that the United States will support the country on this path. She also stated that the United States will support policies of peaceful resolution of disputes, and that rapid growth of the Georgian economy will have decisive importance for the reintegration of the country.

On May 17th, in his speech given during Council of Europe summit held in Warsaw, President Saakashvili declared that “previously there was an unwritten law that CIS member states should not speak about each other. Of course we respect these rules, but protection of democracy and liberty is our key rule. This is a principled issue.”¹⁹⁰ The Georgian President declared the spread of democracy as imminent interest of Georgia and called European leaders to confront the “last dictator of Europe” – Byelorussia’s President Lukashenka. It is noteworthy also that Byelorussian opposition

¹⁸⁸ Burjanadze Discusses Energy Issues with Bush, in: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=9847> (accessed: May 11, 2005)

¹⁸⁹ U.S. Department of State, “Interview of Secretary of State Rice on Imedi TV with Revaz Sakevarishvili,” <http://fpc.state.gov/fpc/46003.htm> (accessed: May 15, 2005)

¹⁹⁰ Georgian President Comments on Belarus, in: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=9903> (accessed: May 17, 2005)

leader Anatoly Lebedko was present during President Bush's visit in Georgia,¹⁹¹ hoping to meet U.S. President. There is no evidence that he managed the meeting, but his presence showed hopes of Byelorussian opposition for the U.S. support in their struggle against Lukashenka's dictatorship, and underlined Georgia's significance as "fore post" of democratic changes in the region.

The National Security Concept of Georgia, which was presented to Georgian Parliament by the National Security Council,¹⁹² sets sovereignty, security, peace and democracy, rule of law, human rights and welfare as Georgia's fundamental national values. Territorial integrity, national unity, regional stability, strengthening of liberty and democracy in neighboring countries and in the region are emphasized as Georgia's national interests. Territorial disintegration, spillover of conflicts from neighboring countries, military intervention, Russian military bases stationed in Georgia, smuggling and transnational organized crime, along with international terrorism are treated as major threats to the Georgian State.

Strengthening of democratic institutions and effective governance; strengthening of defense capabilities; restoration of territorial integrity; Euro-Atlantic integration; strengthening of foreign policy ties; economic security policy; social security policy; information security policy; and energy security policy are declared as main directions of the Georgian security policy. "The Georgian armed forces can also be capable of providing assistance to the civilian authorities in the event of a crisis, or emergency situation, as well as participation in anti-terrorism organizations and international peace support operations," the draft document reads.

The document stresses partnership with the United States in the first place, and elaborates on relations with the Ukraine as a model of new bilateral ties. Turkey is termed a "leading regional partner", and relations with Azerbaijan are determined by joint energy, transport and communications interests. Russia is mentioned in the context of hope for better relations, and Armenia is mentioned as a pragmatic neighbor of Georgia.

¹⁹¹ Belarus Opposition Leader Visits Georgia, in: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=9822> (accessed: May 9, 2005)

¹⁹² National Security Concept Finalized: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=9887> (accessed: May 15, 2005)

All in all, it can be said that the draft document of the Georgian National Security Concept views Georgia's future in the light of democratic changes in the region, and views Georgian security through the prism of its relations with the United States and integration in the European and Transatlantic security and economic institutions. Importantly, strengthening of liberty and democracy in neighboring countries and in the region are emphasized as national interests. This provides good opportunity to address effective informational campaigns, as discussed in this thesis. Other provisions of the Concept seem also in agreement with the observations of this thesis.

On May 29, 2005, the agreement was signed by Georgian and Russian Foreign Ministers about Russian Military base-closure in Georgia.¹⁹³ Importantly, the Ministers stated that the base closure will begin immediately and it will be the step-by-step process which will finalize in 2008. All the facilities and part of equipment will be handed over to Georgia. The base in Akhalkalaki which is densely populated with ethnic Armenians will be closed first, and President Saakashvili reiterated again that local population which was occupied in the Russian base will be offered job in Georgian Armed Forces. For those who will refuse to serve in the Armed Forces, other social benefits will be considered.¹⁹⁴

Finally, it can be said that these events and changes, as described above, do not show any significant deviation from what was expected by the standpoint of this thesis, and these events are still following the general logic of developments, as addressed in the body of the thesis. However, effective informational strategies are still to be elevated, and internal economic and social conditions of the country are still to be improved; the nature of the GUUAM alliance is still to be defined, and defense capabilities build-up must follow a strategic vision of political leadership of the country. In the end, it can be said that Georgia is well proceeding on its way to security, and it can be reasonably believed that the country will reach external security in the nearest future.

¹⁹³ Moscow, Tbilisi Agree on Bases' Withdrawal, in: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=10006> (accessed: May 30, 2005)

¹⁹⁴ Saakashvili Speaks of 'Historic' Moscow Declaration on Bases, in: *Civil Georgia Online Magazine*, <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=10012>, (accessed: May 30, 2005)

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